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THE  
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE  
OF  
ATONEMENT,

PROPOSED TO CAREFUL EXAMINATION.

BY STEPHEN WEST, D.D.

OF STOCKBRIDGE, AMERICA. A. D. 1785.

Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things? LUKE xxiv. 26.  
Without shedding of blood is no remission. HEB. ix. 22.

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## PREFACE.

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AMONG the several doctrines of Divine revelation, that of the Atonement holds a place of principal importance, and has so evident a connexion with the distinguishing doctrines of christianity, that they will be found, on careful inquiry, to stand or fall with it. It lies at the foundation of that system of sentiments which principally distinguishes christianity from mere natural religion. With it are connected the doctrines of the Divinity of Christ, justification by an imputed righteousness, and the perpetuity of punishment in the future world. For if the doctrine of atonement be given up, that of the Divinity of Christ will no longer be maintained, as we can hardly believe that a God ever came into the world to perform a work which did not require the perfections of a God, or that he came to reveal in words, and enforce by example, a system of doctrines, which might have been as perfectly revealed, and as

completely exemplified by a mere creature. If there be no atonement for sin, the repentance of sinners must be the sole ground on which they are pardoned and saved; and, consequently, no other righteousness than their own is, in any sense, the ground of acceptance in the sight of God. If, moreover, the moral law, that perfect rule of Divine government, will admit penitents to favour without any atonement, it will hardly be believed that the disposition in the Governor of the world, which such a law, so constructed and so understood, will naturally exhibit, can ever admit of his inflicting eternal torments on any of his creatures. For, if the offence of the sinner be no greater, in the view of God, than may be overlooked merely upon the consideration of his repentance, and not only wholly overlooked, but the transgressor be treated with every mark of friendship and favour, who will believe that there is displeasure enough existing in the Divine mind ever to inflict eternal torments? For God to make such a distinction between one who confessedly spends this short life chiefly in sin, and one who spends it wholly so,—and that, too, when the crimes of the former, as the case may be, and many times in fact is, greatly exceed those of the latter,—naturally surpasses all belief.

Therefore, he that renounces the doctrine of atonement, to be consistent with himself, must, also,

renounce the Divinity of Christ, and the eternity of punishment; and when these three grand points are given up, there is nothing left in the system of revealed truth materially to distinguish it from mere natural religion; and a crucified Christ will no longer appear to be the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For this reason it is that the doctrine of Atonement has ever been a rock of offence to the enemies of Divine revelation. Because it stands in this connexion, and so evidently implies both the Divinity of Christ, and the eternity of punishment, many have laboured, with their whole strength, to subvert it; but if this falls, it falls like a strong man, pulling down with it the very pillars of christianity.

These considerations, it is hoped, will be a sufficient apology for an attempt to vindicate this great doctrine, and set it in its true and scriptural light. Of the success with which the design is executed in the following pages, the candid, intelligent reader must judge. I can only say, that a desire to support an hypothesis has not, that I am sensible, glossed any of those passages of Scripture which I have had occasion to consider in the discussion of the subject. I pretend not, however, to be free from those prepossessions which are common to sinful men.

But the following treatise, imperfect as it is, with all due deference is humbly offered to public view,

in hope that it may be the occasion of throwing some small degree of light on so important a subject. No caution, it is readily seen, is necessary to be given to any one, against receiving any thing that is contained in it, upon the mere authority of the writer. If the truth contained in the following examination of the Scripture doctrine of Atonement gain admission into the minds and hearts of such as shall be at the trouble of perusing it, this will be the utmost that can reasonably be asked, or desired by the Author.

*Stockbridge, 14th April, 1785.*

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THE  
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE  
OF  
ATONEMENT.

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CHAPTER I.

*Observations respecting God's chief end in the creation of the world.*

ONE principal difficulty in understanding this great and fundamental doctrine, probably consists in our ignorance of the necessity of it. So long as we discern no necessity for an atonement for sin in order to forgiveness, the nature and import of it will be unintelligible; and the reason why an atonement for sin is necessary will not be seen without some just and general view of the great end for which God originally gave birth to creation.

Though unassisted reason might be very unequal to the determination of so important a question, Divine revelation has abundantly supplied the defect; and, in forming our sentiments on a question of such moment, it becomes us to be especially careful that we do not pervert or go aside from the instructions of the word of God. Taking revelation for our guide, we need not be afraid to inquire into things which are above the reach of mere natural reason. And, by

these unerring oracles we are unquestionably authorised to conclude, that a manifestation of his own true and infinitely holy character, was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation.\*

For God to manifest his own proper character is, invariably, to manifest something that is excellent. Wherever we discover the Divine character, we see something that is excellent. To say, therefore, that a manifestation of his own true and holy character was God's chief and ultimate end in creation, is no more than saying, in the language of Scripture, that "he made all things for his pleasure, for his glory, or for his great name's sake." It is the pleasure and the glory of God to make some external exhibition of his own inherent perfection, and to discover to his creatures his own proper character, which is, in itself, infinitely excellent. God evidently designed to exhibit an external image or portraiture of his own infinite mind, in which its excellences might be seen by his creatures. But the excellences of mind, we are all sensible, can be discerned by others only in the external expressions of its capacity and disposition. So that we have no where to learn the Divine character, but in his works, taken in connection with his word.

As we all agree that God is most eminently good, it is evident that the real disposition of his infinite mind doth not appear, excepting in works of goodness, and where some good is actually done. His true character, therefore, cannot otherwise be manifested than in doing good. Consequently, a manifestation of the proper character of God will necessarily comprehend all the good, all the created felicity,

\* For a particular enumeration of passages of Scripture in proof of this point, see the late President Edwards on "God's last end in the Creation of the World."

which he ever had it in design to bring about, and which will ever be accomplished.

That the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation was a manifestation of his own true and proper character, will appear from two considerations.

I. We can conceive of no other end which the supreme Being could have in view in this great work. The motives for God to create, must, of necessity, all be within himself. No motive could be derived from any thing out of himself, for no such thing had any existence; and to say that creation itself, or any thing created, was the motive in the Divine mind to creation, is but going in a circle, and leaves us as ignorant of the end of creation at the close of our inquiry as at our first setting out.

To say that the happiness to be produced by creation was God's primary end in giving birth to it, supposes that the Creator is essentially of a disposition to be pleased with the happiness of his creatures. This must be true, in order that the happiness of creatures might be a motive to him to create; and if God is essentially possessed of a disposition of this kind of sufficient strength to induce him to create, he neither needed, nor in the nature of things could have, any motive from without himself, to this great work. In this case the disposition to produce and diffuse happiness, must, itself, be the motive to the work of creation, and not the hitherto uncreated happiness; and if this disposition were not originally of such strength as necessarily to flow out in its natural effects, there neither was, nor could be, any thing in the universe to give it new strength and draw it forth into action. If the disposition to produce and diffuse happiness were not itself the motive to creation, we

can conceive of nothing to give spring to it, and set it in motion, and it must, of course, remain utterly unaccountable that ever God made the world.

The object of the Divine mind in creation could not be really to add to himself, or increase his own fulness, for his being and fulness were already infinite, and, of course, beyond a possibility of increase. It remains, therefore, that to diffuse that infinite and unbounded fulness which he possesses in himself, must have been the primary end of creation; and this is nothing different from saying, that a manifestation of his own true character was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation.

II. There could in the nature of things be no higher or more excellent end of creation, than a manifestation of the true character of God. As the Divine character is in itself transcendently excellent, so are all the manifestations of it in the exercises of his perfections, and in these exercises and manifestations there is greater beauty than in all created virtue together. And, as there is a beauty in the exercises and displays of the Divine perfections, infinitely superior to all created excellency, there is, also, proportionably greater felicity in the Divine mind in these exercises, than can possibly exist in all creatures. Consequently, it is, in itself, the most desirable thing that can be conceived, that God should exercise and display his own glorious perfections. Every thing which is either desirable, or beautiful, in creatures, is found in an infinitely higher degree in the exercises of the inherent perfections of the Divine mind; and these exercises are naturally accompanied with infinitely greater good than the united exercises of all created power and virtue together. To say that the beauty and worth of the exercises

of God's perfections consist principally in the virtue and happiness which they produce in creatures, is to make the virtue and happiness of God himself, of less worth and importance than those of his creatures ; and this is the same as to say, that finite virtue and happiness are of more worth than infinite.

The effects of the exercise and display of God's perfections are the virtue and happiness of creatures. But if the virtue and happiness of creatures, are of real worth, that same kind of virtue and happiness existing in an infinitely higher degree in the Creator, is infinitely more so ; and, therefore, the exercise and manifestations of the Divine perfections is an object, in itself considered, of infinitely greater importance than the good of the creature.

Though the created beauty and good which are the natural effects of the exercise and manifestation of the Divine perfections must, of necessity, be considered as connected with these manifestations, the objects, nevertheless, are two, and capable of an entirely distinct consideration ; and as they are capable of being distinctly and separately considered, the virtue and good of the creature must be considered only as the stream from the fountain, when compared with the virtue and happiness of God ; and, consequently, the good of the creature, considered as an object in and of itself, could no more give spring to the Divine perfections, and put them into exercise, than the stream which proceeds from the fountain could put the fountain itself into motion, and cause it to overflow.

As, therefore, there could be no other or higher end of creation, than a manifestation of the true and proper character, the real perfection of God, we may safely conclude that this was the primary end which

God had in view in creating the world; and that the cause and reason of creation is to be sought nowhere but in the Divine mind itself—in the real, essential perfection of God.

It being evident, then, that a manifestation of his own character was the chief and ultimate end which God had in view in creation, these several consequences will naturally follow from it, viz.

1. That all God's government will be calculated, in the best manner, to discover to his creatures his own true character. That this is, and ever will be, the case, may certainly be concluded from the unchangeable nature of God. God's works will all be carried on with the same design with which they were begun. His purposes are all connected, uniform, and harmonious. With him "there is no variable-ness, nor even the shadow of turning." As he gave birth to creation, with a view to display the excellences of his own glorious character, with the same view, and for the same desirable end, he continues, preserves, and governs the world. For his pleasure they now are, as well as originally were created. All that God says, and all that he does, have one uniform and glorious object in view; and his government is as true a picture of his character as his moral law, which is frequently and justly styled "a transcript of the Divine perfections." Accordingly, we may for ever expect to see his mind written, and his character as indubitably expressed, in what he does, as in what he says—in the government which he exercises, as in the law which he has given. For, with the same uniform design he creates, gives law, and administers government.

The same glorious design which is expressed in creation will be invariably expressed in preservation,



for, in strictness of speech, preservation is no more than creation continued. What gave birth to the existence of creatures will direct in the government over them. And should we entertain a thought that God's moral government will not be eternally administered in such a manner as to express, to the best advantage, his true character, we must at once admit, either that he has changed his original scheme, or that the government of so vast and complicated a system is become too unwieldy for its great and original Creator; either of which suppositions is atheistical and absurd.

2. From the preceding observations it will follow, that the good of the creature, in itself considered, was not the chief and principal end of creation. However closely a manifestation of the Divine perfection and the good of the creature may be connected together, they are still capable of being viewed as distinct objects, in many respects infinitely diverse from each other. Though it be readily granted that God's ends are answered in the good of the creature, nevertheless, the designs and purposes of God, and that wherein these purposes and designs are accomplished, are as perfectly two, as any different objects whatever. A parent's whole pleasure may be in the good of the child, nevertheless, the parent's pleasure and the child's good are two objects, capable of entirely distinct and separate consideration, and, however closely they may be connected together, the very supposition of their connexion implies that they are two, and, therefore, capable of being separately considered. So, however closely the glory of God, or a manifestation of his true and proper character, and the good of the creature, may be connected together, the objects are, nevertheless, in nature really two, and entirely

capable of distinct consideration ; and if in nature two, one may have a primary and original influence in the Divine works rather than the other. . But, the more important one, or that in which there is the greatest degree of weight, excellency, and worth, every thing concurs to prove would indeed be the object of chief consideration. As much more beauty and worth, therefore, as there are in the real exercises and displays of the Divine perfections and character, than in the created fruits of them in creatures, (however close and inseparable the connexion may be between these different objects,) so much more is the former an original and chief end of God in creation than the latter.

3. It follows from what has been said, that God will take effectual care, that in all his administration, the majesty and the superior dignity of his own infinitely excellent character, shall be fully and perfectly preserved. Since God made the world for the sake of displaying his own true character, we may rest assured, that he will take effectual care that the glory and dignity of it be effectually preserved in the view of all his creatures. Nothing will ever take place in the Divine government that will have a tendency finally to sink the character of God in the view of his creatures ; but, on the other hand, in his progressive administration, it will continually rise higher and higher, appear more and more admirable, and be clothed with greater majesty and glory. Every part of the Divine conduct, will certainly be such as to demand the highest veneration and esteem, and tend, in the view of all intelligences, to display that infinite distance which really subsists between him and all created beings.

No part of the Divine conduct will ever be such as



naturally tends to represent in a diminutive light his hatred of all opposition to the good for which he made the world, or his abhorrence of rebellion and wickedness. For this would not exhibit his true character, but the reverse; this would not correspond with his oracles, his verbal declarations, but contradict them. We may therefore certainly conclude, on the other hand, that in God's progressive dealings with his creatures, that transcendantly excellent and glorious disposition of the Divine mind, whereby he holds all moral evil in the greatest possible abhorrence, will be continually appearing in more lively and glowing colours.

To suppose that this will certainly be the case, is perfectly correspondent with what the holy Scriptures teach us must originally have been the design of God in giving existence to moral creatures. While, on the other hand, should the Divine government, in its progressive steps, impress the minds of creatures with no deeper and more affecting sense of his infinite purity and hatred of iniquity, the whole moral character of the great Governor of the world must, of necessity, suffer, and appear not uniform, nor wholly without defect.

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## CHAPTER II.

*An inquiry into the original ground of the necessity of an atonement, in order to the forgiveness of sin.*

THE original design of God, in the creation of the world, will naturally lead us to suppose, that a

disposition to exhibit his character in its true colours, was the cause of his requiring an atonement for sin, before he would exercise pardoning mercy. Since this was God's original end in creation, it must also be the governing principle in all his future administration. Of course, therefore, the true reason why God required an atonement for sin was, that the real disposition of his own infinite mind toward such an object might appear, even though he pardoned and saved the sinner. Could the character of God, the disposition of the Divine mind both toward holiness and sin, otherwise have appeared to equal advantage, there is not the least reason to imagine that he would have required an atonement, because God will never be at expense, where no advantage is gained. But to say that this is the consideration which originally made an atonement necessary, is the same as to say that the necessity of it, in order to a proper exercise of mercy, arose from the very nature of the Divine character, and the essential perfection of God. For it is the essential perfection of the Divine nature, and the genuine character of God, that are to be displayed in all his works and government.

It is reasonable to suppose that God required an atonement for sin, that his creatures might be sensible of the abhorrence he has of it, notwithstanding the forgiveness he is pleased to exercise toward the sinner. The end which God had in view in the creation of the world, forbids the exercise of mercy toward sinners in any way which tends to diminish the sense of infinite guilt and ill desert in his sight. As the real aversion of the Divine mind to sin is infinite, it evidently became his character to adopt some measures in his providence effectually to convince his creatures that this aversion still subsists, in all its

strength, even though he pardon the sinner; otherwise, the character of God would, of necessity, be misapprehended by his creatures, and the nature of his mercy be misunderstood.

We may confide in it, that nothing will ever take place in the Divine government which will tend to render the spotless holiness of God in the least degree suspicious, or represent him less an enemy to sin, than a friend to virtue; and that, in order to this, there was originally in the nature of things a necessity of an atonement before mercy could be exercised in the pardon of the sinner, will appear from the following considerations.

I. Should God pardon absolutely, or without adopting measures, at the same time, to convince his creatures of his infinite hatred of iniquity, his regard to the good of the great community over which he presides would necessarily appear to his creatures to be defective.

It is essential to the goodness of a governor, or king, to guard the rights, secure the peace, and promote the prosperity of his subjects. No one can be called a good governor who does not exercise his supremacy and authority, in framing and executing laws for the protection and safety of his subjects. It is as essential to the character of a good ruler to punish vice as to reward virtue, to avenge the wrongs of his subjects as to secure their interests; yea, the former is essential to the latter, since only the fear of punishment restrains wicked men from violence. Should a ruler suffer crimes to go unpunished, the laws, however good and righteous in themselves, would presently lose their authority, and government fall into contempt. Laws have no force any further than they are carried into execution, and authority

loses its respect whenever it ceases to be exercised. Whenever the supreme magistrate neglects the execution of the laws, he loses the confidence of the people, and his regard to the public welfare becomes suspected. No one can confide in his public spirit, when he suffers the disturbers of the peace to go unpunished ; for ideas of true regard to public good as necessarily connect punishments with crimes as rewards with virtue.

The confidence of a community in the character of a governor, arises, in a great measure, from the opinion they have of his sincere, benevolent regard to the general good ; and they can no further confide in his regard to the public good, than they believe him to be averse to every thing that injures the public. As it is impossible that the love of virtue, in any being whatever, should exceed his hatred of vice, it is impossible for any one to give evidence of the former, when, the object being presented, he neglects expressing the latter in ways becoming his character.

Should God pardon the sinner, without taking effectual measures to manifest his hatred of his sins, the evidence of his love to the public good would necessarily be defective. This, of course, would be a mode of administration exceedingly inconsistent with his original design in the creation and government of the world.

II. If God should pardon sin without an atonement, he could not be believed to hate iniquity.

The views, which God has of the characters of his creatures, and the affection of his mind respecting them, can be no where so clearly seen as in his treatment of them. God is a spirit invisible to men, and cannot be known intuitively by them. We can see him only in his word and works ; and, when we

consider him as the Parent and Fountain of all being and good, and ourselves as the mere creatures of his power most absolutely dependent on him, it will be natural for us to suppose that his ultimate treatment of us affords the best rule whereby we may judge of the light in which he views our characters, and of the disposition he entertains towards us; and though words are significant, they are less so than actions. It is a common, and a just observation, that actions speak louder than words; yea, a maxim on which we so firmly rely, that we give the whole weight to the former when they contradict the latter. All agree that the mind and will of God may be intelligibly expressed in words; yet, no one will deny that they may be written in much deeper and more legible characters, in the sensible pleasures and pains which he may bestow or inflict upon us. Therefore, the evidence of God's love of virtue, and his hatred of vice, must ultimately be derived from the treatment he gives his creatures. In this we most clearly discover his view of their character, and the estimation in which he holds them; as well as the feelings of the Divine mind toward virtue and vice.

If the views which the Supreme Being entertains of characters, and the feelings of his mind towards those who sustain them, are most clearly discovered in the treatment of his creatures, in the natural good and evil he ultimately brings upon them,—then, of course, where the treatment is the same, we are to judge that the feelings of the Divine mind toward the objects are also the same. What but this can be the rule of our judgment? If God's treatment be the best and ultimate rule of judging, then similar treatment authorizes us to believe that he holds all the subjects of it in equal estimation, and is equally

pleased or displeased with one as with another. If God should treat the virtuous and vicious alike, from whence could we infer his approbation of the former, or his abhorrence of the latter? If his treatment of them in his government be the same, then either his government fails of expressing his proper character, or his character is not uniform and perfect. And if God's actions and conduct toward his creatures do not truly express his character, his mind and will, how shall we know that his word does? And by what methods can we ever come to the knowledge of the Divine character?

Further; if the treatment God gives his creatures in his providence, the natural good and evil he confers upon them, be not ultimately a certain rule whereby to judge of his disposition towards them, and the views he has of their characters, the consequence will be, that we cannot infer a difference of character in the subjects from the different treatment they receive at the hand of God; and, if this be the case, then natural evil will, in no case whatever, be a proof of God's displeasure any more than natural good will be a proof of his approbation and favour. And thus shall we be left quite in the dark as to the Divine character, having no sure interpreter of the will of God, either in his word or in his providence.

But if the natural good and evil which God ultimately confers on his creatures be a certain rule whereby we may judge of the views which he entertains of their characters, it would be inconsistent to suppose that he should ever pardon a sinner without any atonement, or without taking some effectual methods, in his providence, to discover his infinite hatred of their characters and actions. If the providences of God are expressions of his own character,



it is inconceivable that he should not in some way or other, in his providence, express the views and feelings of his mind toward the characters and conduct of sinners. But if the natural good and evil that are ultimately, and on the whole, brought on creatures, are sure and certain indications of the Divine disposition toward them, then the abhorrence in which God holds the characters of sinners must, of necessity, be expressed in some other way than in evil finally brought upon the sinner himself, in order that his salvation may be consistent with the end of God in the creation of the world, and the invariable rule of his providence, whereby he exhibits his own character to the view of his creatures. For, unless this should be done, the pardon and salvation of a sinner leave us in an utter uncertainty with respect to the Divine character itself, whether or not God were a hater of iniquity, and, of course, whether or not a lover of righteousness.

If God should pardon the sinner, without taking some sufficient and effectual method, at the same time, to discover his infinite hatred of iniquity,—if he should treat the clean and the unclean, the virtuous and vicious, alike,—we should have no means left whereby to determine that he held their characters in any different estimation, and either approved, or disapproved the one more than the other. Therefore such a mode of providence would be inconsistent with the end which God had in view both in the creation and government of the world, which was to manifest his own glory, and to display his own infinitely holy character.

III. The government of God could not be respected, should he pardon the sinner without discovering, at the same time, his infinite hatred of

his sins, and the perfect abhorrence he has of his character.

The Supreme Being cannot be regarded as a governor, any further than he is believed to hate iniquity, and he cannot be believed to hate iniquity, when it actually takes place among his creatures, any further than his hatred is, in some way or other, expressed. But if God, in his providence, should treat the virtuous and the vicious alike,—making no difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane,—if he should confer the same good upon the one as upon the other, taking no measures to show that he regarded the character of the one in any different light from that of the other, his government would, of necessity, lose its force, and be no restraint upon his creatures.

No one can respect a government which provides no punishment for the wicked; and whatever punishments be provided by law, if the executive authority neglect the execution, the government must, of necessity, fall into contempt. If, therefore, God cease to discover his hatred of the rebellion and wickedness of his creatures, he would lose his authority, and render his benevolence and good will justly suspicious; but if the treatment God gives his creatures, in the good and the evil he confers upon them, be sure indications of the views he entertains of their characters, for him to pardon the sinner without an atonement, or without taking some effectual measures to discover his hatred of his sins, would necessarily injure his character, weaken his authority, and bring his government into contempt.

IV. For God to pardon the sinner without an atonement would be inconsistent with the true spirit and import of his holy law.



If God's written law express his true character, and be a genuine transcript of his moral perfection, we may be confident that his whole government will be administered in perfect conformity to it. The government of God can no more vary from the true import of the law, than God can vary from himself. If the moral law express the true character of God, his moral government will express the same, and will therefore be perfectly of a piece with the law.

Respecting the written moral law, we are to note the following things:

1. That it abounds with pains and penalties, and those too of a very awful nature, threatening death, even eternal destruction, for every transgression. It curseth "every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. It makes no provision for pardon, and gives not the least hope of mercy, in any case, or on any condition whatever, but most explicitly and unconditionally condemns every transgressor, without one exception, to everlasting misery. That this is the unequivocal language of the law, it is presumed, no one will deny. This is the law which expresses the true character of God, which is a transcript of his essential moral perfection. This is a law which shows the mind and will of God, the very feelings of his heart.

2. The penalties and sanctions of the law express an exceedingly high degree of righteous anger and indignation, in the Divine mind, against the sinner. They express in words that same displeasure which will appear in effects in the eternal torments of sinners. When God actually inflicts eternal torments on the sinner, he will no more than act out the same

disposition or character which is expressed in words in the threatenings of the law.

If the threatenings of the law do not manifest Divine anger, it is impossible for words to do it. If the language of the Divine law is equivocal, the providences of God may be equally so; and all those dreadful punishments, which will hereafter be inflicted on his enemies, will not afford unequivocal evidence of the real indignation of God.

3. We are to note that the principal importance of the penalty, as well as of the precepts of the law, consists in its expressing the real character of God. What, above every thing else, makes the penalties of the law necessary and important, is, that they show the purity of the Divine mind, and his unalterable and infinite aversion to all iniquity. This is the grand consideration which makes punishments necessary in the Divine government. The misery of a creature, merely in itself, answers no valuable end, and were it not a glass in which God's infinite hatred of sin is seen, it never would be inflicted. As the great end of God, in all his other works, is to manifest his own excellent character, so it is in inflicting punishments upon offenders; and no further than punishments answer the end of exhibiting a disposition that really hath existence in the Divine mind, will they ever be inflicted.

Now, if it be true, that the law represents the Governor of the world as being angry, and that in a very high degree, with the sinner, it is easy to see that his government would not correspond with it should he pardon the transgressor without exhibiting at the same time, in a sensible manner, his righteous anger against him for his sins. If the Divine law

denounces curses against the sinner, and, as far as words can do it, exhibits Divine anger against him ; it is manifest that the forgiveness of the sinner, without testifying, at the same time, in some proper and convincing way, an abhorrence of his character and wickedness, would counteract both the letter and the manifest import of the Divine law. It is hence evident, that it could not have been consistent with that character of God which is exhibited in the law, to pardon the sinner without an atonement.

When God has devised a method in his providence, wherein he exhibits sensible conviction of his hatred of iniquity, the pardon of the sinner cannot counteract the spirit of that law which exhibits the same disposition in the Divine mind towards the offender, especially when the great end and excellency of the law consists in its making a true exhibition of the Divine moral character ; and this is the great consideration which makes it important that government should be administered in conformity to the law. In whatever method a uniformity of character with what originally appears in the law is preserved in administration, the ends of the Divine government are answered, and the honour of the Lawgiver secured. But unless dispensing rewards and punishments indiscriminately to the good and to the bad naturally exhibits the same character and disposition which appear in the promises and in the threatenings of the law, it must of necessity be inconsistent with the law to pardon the sinner without an atonement, or without ministering, at the same time, effectual conviction of God's infinite hatred of his sins.

If it be not necessary to the honour of the Divine character and government that God should exhibit his wrath in some sensible fruits against sinners, it is

not necessary that he should threaten it. Nothing need be threatened in the law, which is not necessary to be exhibited in government. Uniformity of character cannot require that anger should be expressed in words, where there is no necessity of exhibiting it in fruits in government. For in cases wherein it is not necessary to the honour of the Divine character, to manifest anger by sensible fruits, it cannot be that anger should exist in the Divine mind. And to suppose that God threatens his creatures with his anger, in cases wherein he hath in reality no anger against them, at once denies the moral law to be an expression of the mind and will of God—a transcript of his moral perfection. But it is obvious, at first view, that the act of pardoning, that is, saving a person, and receiving him to the enjoyment of the everlasting favour of God, doth not in itself discover any anger or wrath; consequently, consistently with the moral law this never can be done without God's exhibiting his anger against the sinner in sensible fruits, in some other way.

Further: for God to save sinners of mankind without an atonement would suppose the law and the gospel to speak a different language, and to exhibit characters exceedingly diverse one from the other. It would make the former breathe nothing but indignation, where the latter speaks nothing but peace, comfort, and good, and therefore, on this supposition, the gospel instead of establishing would make void the law.

It hence appears to be as essential to the honour of the Divine government, and to a uniformity of character in God, that he should exhibit anger in sensible fruits against sin, in every instance wherein it takes place, as that in sensible fruits he should

exhibit his approbation of righteousness. God hath as real displeasure against sinners, as he hath approbation of the righteous; the former is as essential to the perfection and glory of the Divine character as the latter. That the government of God, therefore, may express his real character, and that too in the same point of light in which it is exhibited in the law, it is as necessary that he should express anger against the sinner, in his administration of government, as approbation of the righteous.

Therefore it is necessary, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, that the honour of the law should be maintained, and that the government of God in every instance should be expressive of the same disposition which the law, taken in all its parts, naturally exhibits. It is necessary that the Supreme Ruler of the universe should appear in his administration equally to respect the penal as the preceptive parts of his law, and to pay as much regard to the threatenings of punishment, as to the promises of reward; and in whatever way this is done in God's conduct to his creatures, the ends of Divine government are answered, and all the good effected which naturally flows from a display of his true and proper character.

The penalties of the law, we are to remember, express the displeasure of the Lawgiver in the pain and sufferings of the transgressor. But however closely and inseparably these two objects may be connected together, they are yet really two, and capable of an entirely distinct and separate consideration. And as these objects are two, they are, in themselves considered, of very different importance; and of course the penalties of the law must be of infinitely greater importance as being expressive of God's righteous displeasure against sin, than as bringing pain and

torment on the sinner. Accordingly, the great ends of Divine government, which are to make a true and proper exhibition of the Divine character, cannot be answered, whatever be the fate of the sinner, without convincing testimonies to the world, of God's infinite purity and hatred of iniquity. The clearer views we have of the Divine character, and of the original designs of the Supreme Being in the creation of the world, the more sensibly shall we discern the necessity of an atonement in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy, and the more clearly shall we discover the inconsistency of forgiveness with the true spirit and import of the law, unless full proof be exhibited in the moral government of God of his infinite hatred of iniquity.

From this view of the necessity of an atonement in order to a consistent exercise of mercy, the following observations naturally flow.

(1.) That the honour of the Divine law, agreeably to the true spirit and import of it, is fully preserved in the government of God, when his displeasure against sin is made to appear, to equal advantage, as it doth in the execution of the penalties of the law, in whatever way it be done; and it appears on the other hand, that whatever method of administration would throw a veil over God's hatred of iniquity, and render it more obscure to the view of creatures than it would be in the execution of its penalties, would dishonour the law itself, and naturally tend to bring it into contempt. The law is really honoured, when that character of God which is exhibited in the various parts of it, is supported and maintained in his government; therefore the penalty of the law is really answered, and its demands satisfied, whenever God's hatred of iniquity is as clearly exhibited in acts of government,



as it is expressed in the language of the law, in whatever way this be done. The law of God is satisfied and its penalties answered in the final condemnation of the sinner, only because the true character of God is herein visibly manifested, and his just displeasure against iniquity clearly discovered ; at least this is the most important and valuable end that is answered by the sinner's final destruction. Were not this the case, the execution of punitive justice would not be to the glory of God, because it would not serve to display the true beauties of his infinitely excellent and glorious character.

That the moral character of God should be truly delineated in his government, is the object of primary importance ; because with this is certainly connected the order, the harmony, and the greatest good of the universe. The character of God being infinitely excellent, and in itself most perfectly harmonious, when it is truly delineated in his government, must of necessity be productive of the greatest good and harmony among his creatures ; to manifest the real excellences of the Divine character, therefore it was, that the law was originally given, and for the same end was it established by such awful sanctions. The honour of the law is of course evidently maintained, and the ends of government answered, when that character, with which the Supreme Ruler invests himself in the various parts of his law, is exhibited and supported in its administration. So that whenever God's just and real displeasure against sin is exhibited in some other way to equal advantage as it would be in the final destruction of the sinner, atonement is then made for man's sins, and a door opened for the exercise of pardoning mercy.

(2.) It would be as inconsistent with the design of

God in the government of the world, to suffer the sins of his creatures to pass unnoticed, as their virtue to go unrewarded. The end of God in his moral government as much requires that he should testify his hatred of iniquity as his love of holiness; and if the moral government of God be designed truly to delineate his character, if we are here to expect a sensible discovery of the feelings, the disposition of his own infinite mind, toward the several characters of his creatures, it must appear every way as inconsistent for God to neglect expressing his righteous displeasure against vice, as his approbation of virtue; God's hatred of the former is as real and immutable as his love of the latter. Therefore that mode of administration toward sinners, which would not sensibly express the former, would no more comport with the character and designs of God, than that which should leave the latter undiscovered.

If these things are so, it will be as inconsistent with the attributes of God and the great end which he has in view in the government of the world, to suffer one sin to pass without expressing in some convincing manner his hatred of it, as to suffer virtue to go unrewarded; not only so, but it will, on these principles, be essential to the Divine glory, that the moral government of God should be as full and sensible an expression of his abhorrence of every impure character among his creatures, as of his approbation of the conduct of all such as never rebelled against him. If the moral government of God should not be administered in such a manner as sensibly to express this to his creatures, it would not exhibit his true character, the real and infinitely excellent disposition of his own holy mind.

(3.) It appears from what has been already



observed, that the atonement had a more immediate and direct relation to the penal part of the Divine law.

It is unquestionably true, that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation to declare God's righteousness; and the great ends of righteousness required that there should be an atonement for sin, in order to prepare the way for its remission. But it is to be remembered, that it was the righteousness of God, as it related to the execution of threatened and deserved punishment, which needed to be declared, in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy, and not as it related to the bestowment of rewards,—righteousness as it respected rendering vengeance to enemies, not favour and protection to friends. God's favour for the righteous, and his approbation of their characters, would not have been rendered suspicious by a total neglect to execute punitive justice, unless indeed his benevolent regard to their best interest, and his distinguishing approbation of their characters, should become suspicious by his neglect to avenge them on their adversaries. But the very supposition of a possibility that God's benevolent regard to the righteous should be rendered doubtful by his neglecting to punish the wicked, strongly implies that it was the righteousness of God as it relates to the execution of punishment that needed to be declared, in order to the pardon of the sinner.

Had vengeance against God's enemies never been displayed, every blessing which obedience could have merited, and which in that case could have been enjoyed, might nevertheless be bestowed. So that the Deity could not justly have been impeached as being deficient in his regard to the righteous, had he pardoned sin without an atonement, for as far as righteousness in a governor relates to approving and rewarding

the obedient, God might nevertheless have appeared perfectly just and righteous.

But with respect to righteousness as it relates to the execution of deserved punishment, the case is, far otherwise. In this respect, when sin had actually taken place, the Divine righteousness needed honour and vindication, and necessarily would need them until it were in some sensible manner exhibited to the view of creatures ; for the character of God could not fail of being reproached as deficient both in his regard to his own authority, and in making a distinction between the holy and the unclean, had he pardoned sin without a visible exhibition of his hatred of the iniquity of the sinner ; and even the obedient part of the universe had no small interest in a display of righteousness in this regard, as it could not fail of contributing to their sense of security under the government of God, and their greater and more respectful reverence of his character.

So that whatever part of the universe was concerned in the displays of Divine righteousness, in order to the remission of sin, whether it were God himself and his own infinitely excellent character, or the obedient and virtuous part of creation, still what most concerned both was, that righteousness as it more directly related to the penalties and sanctions of the law should be exhibited and made sensibly to appear.

If it should be urged, that the righteousness of God, in the most large and general sense of the term, might have been sufficiently displayed by some lively exhibition of his regard to the preceptive parts of the law, because the penal only represents God's love of righteousness in general, still this would be no argument that the atonement did not more immediately

respect the penal part of the Divine law. For admitting the ultimate use of penalties to be no more than to express God's love of righteousness in general, or even his love of obedience, still they cannot do this any further than they are regarded in the administration of government. If the penalties of the law should not be regarded in the government of God, they could not serve to illustrate his love of obedience. For the righteousness of God as it respects the precepts of the law, is as evidently discernible in his regard to the penalties, as his righteousness relative to the penalties is in his regard to the precepts. The Governor of the world as strongly and sensibly manifests his love of obedience by punishing wickedness, as his hatred of iniquity by rewarding virtue; and since, in the Divine view, the precepts and the penalties of the law are both necessary in order to a clear and full discovery of the character and glory of God, it is necessary that both be equally regarded in the administration of government. So that in whatever light we view the matter, it must appear of equal importance that God should manifest his respect to the penalties of the law by a display of anger, as to the precepts by approbation; and since both parts of the law are essential to its authority, and to the glory and honour of its giver, it is also necessary that the government of God should appear to correspond with both, and equally necessary that he should display vengeance as bestow rewards; therefore is it manifest that the Divine righteousness, particularly as it relates to the execution of vengeance, was what peculiarly needed to be honoured, in order to a consistent and justifiable exercise of mercy toward sinners.

(4.) As far as God's love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity can be separately viewed and

distinguished from each other, the great end of the death of Christ was to exhibit the latter, not the former.

The disposition of the Divine mind is perfectly uniform and harmonious ; there is nothing in God, or in the disposition of his mind, but benevolence and love. Yet general goodness operates in a different manner toward different objects, and obtains different epithets, according to these severally different operations. Should we, for instance, conceive no different ideas of Divine justice from those which we entertain of Divine mercy, it is evident we should have no proper and adequate conceptions of either ; or should we form no different ideas of God's love of virtue, and of his hatred of vice, it is manifest that we should view him as being indifferent to virtue and vice. Yet the very different ways in which God's love of virtue and his hatred of vice express themselves in fruits, and the extremely different effects they produce in the subjects on whom they are severally displayed, naturally lead us to view them as, in some respects, exceedingly different from each other, however obviously they discover, in their several operations, beautiful harmony and uniformity in the disposition of the Divine mind.

Seeing, therefore, the existence of moral evil naturally furnished occasion for a display of God's hatred of iniquity, and evidently called for it, this would lead us to view the death of Christ as being designed more immediately and directly to make a visible discovery of the anger of God against sin.

Therefore, we may reasonably suppose, it is that the people of Christ are so often spoken of as being redeemed by his blood, as though his life went for theirs. The Scriptures represent the church of God as being purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28 ;

redeemed through the blood of Christ, Eph. i. 7 ; made nigh by his blood, chap. ii. 13, &c. So the blood of his cross is that by which he is said to make peace, Col. i. 20 ; and the church above is represented as celebrating Christ for his worthiness to open the book and disclose the future state of the church and world, because he was slain and had redeemed her to God by his blood, Rev. v. 9. In this view of the matter the apostle asserts that without shedding of blood there is no remission, Heb. ix. 22. The reason why so much efficacy is ascribed to blood evidently is, that it is the life, Gen. ix. 4 ; and therefore it is that the blood makes atonement, Lev. xvii. 11.

Taking away the life is the most strong and sensible expression of displeasure that is ever visible to us ; that displeasure which puts a period to the life, we view as of the highest kind : therefore doth the death of Christ more directly exhibit the anger of God than his love, as that affection of the Divine mind which is termed anger especially needed to be exhibited in order to a proper exercise of mercy. Virtue in the creature furnishes occasion for the manifestation of complacency and love, but vice for the display of anger ; and had the occasion for the latter been omitted by the great Governor of the world, when rebellion had actually taken place, we cannot conceive how it would have been for the glory of God to pardon the sinner, or how he could have been just in justifying the ungodly.

(5.) It appears from the nature of God's design in creation, and from the ground on which an atonement became necessary, that the great end of the coming and death of Christ was not to give evidence of the equity and righteousness of the moral law, but rather to exhibit in its proper colours the disposition of the

Divine mind toward us for breaking it. The righteousness of the law merely as a rule, and the disposition of the Divine mind toward creatures who violate it, are distinct objects which are to be separately considered. The objects are as perfectly different from each other, as the Divine mind itself and any of those media or objects through which it is seen; and in regard of these two different objects, when viewed in a separate light, it is to be remembered that in real importance the former is infinitely exceeded by the latter. However truly, therefore, a testimony to the righteousness of God's law as a rule of life might be contained in the design of the coming and death of Christ, a discovery of the Divine disposition toward men for violating it, was nevertheless an infinitely greater part of the design of Christ's work than the other.

To suppose that the principal design of the coming of Christ was to exhibit evidence to the consciences of men of the righteousness of the Divine law, either as a rule of government for God or of conduct for us, would be, for aught we can see, rather a reproach than an honour to the Divine character. For this would suppose that the law of God, though originally inscribed in the fullest manner that it could be on the hearts of men, was nevertheless of such a nature and extent that the creature could see neither the propriety of God's governing by it, nor the reason of his own obligation to obey it, and therefore that the law of God was not originally fitted to discover the true beauties of the Divine character.

No rule or law can be good which is either above the natural abilities, or not suited to the circumstances of the creatures who are placed under it. Such a law could not manifest the excellency of the Creator



to the view of the creature ; for these reasons it must be unsuitable, both as a rule of government for the former, and of conduct for the latter. Both these considerations lead us to conclude, that no defects of this kind could be originally attributed to the Divine law. But if the moral law is in its own nature fit to be regarded by the Supreme Being as a rule of government over his creatures, and by men as a rule of their own conduct, and in this way calculated to exhibit to the view of creatures the real excellences of the Divine character, it must be unquestionably true, that man in his original state was fully capable of seeing the law to be wholly righteous ; and if men were originally capable of this, it does not now require, and never did or will require, any thing more than candour of mind, to enable any one to discover it.

These things being so, it is easy to see that conviction of the righteousness of the law might be wrought in the consciences of men, in a way infinitely less expensive than by the coming and death of the Son of God ; yea, were there no other ground of conviction in the case, this remarkable event would be far from affording it. For so long as we judge a rule itself to be bad, no conduct of any one formed upon it, will make us believe it to be good. While we dispute the righteousness of the rule given, we dispute the righteousness of him who gave it ; and in that case his obeying it himself will no more convince us of its equity, than his administering government over us in conformity to it. We may safely conclude therefore, that to minister conviction to the consciences of men of the righteousness of the moral law, as a rule, was not the principal object in view in the coming and work of Christ.

There needed no such evidence as the obedience and death of Christ of the righteousness of the moral law, either as a rule of government for God, or of conduct for his creatures. But when men had violated the law, there needed visible demonstration of the existence of that displeasure in the Divine mind with which the sinner is threatened, in order to convince the creature that the law is indeed a transcript of the Divine perfection, and that it truly expresses the mind and will of God ; otherwise the exercise of pardoning mercy would render it doubtful whether the moral law expressed the Divine character, and is really in every part equitable, even in the view of God. The exercise of mercy, therefore, without a sensible exhibition of that Divine wrath which is threatened in the law, would give abundant occasion to call in question the perfect real conformity of the Divine will to that moral law which he has given us ; this, consequently, could in no wise be for the glory of God.

(6.) It appears from the preceding observations, that to revive natural religion, the knowledge of which was nearly eradicated from the human mind, was far from being the principal object of the coming and death of Christ.

To inscribe the original law of our nature on the hearts of men is every where in Scripture represented as a work of God's Holy Spirit ; and this Holy Spirit, in these operations on the minds of men, we are taught to believe, proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is sent by the Father in the name of the Son ; see John xiv. 15, 16, 18, 23, 26, and xv. 26. It is a great and inestimable favour to have the Holy Spirit sent into the hearts of men to teach them and lead them into the truth, and to revive those original ideas of God and duty which have been nearly



obliterated from the human mind by the fall ; and if such a favour as this could have been bestowed otherwise than as the fruit of the atonement, every other blessing which is promised in the gospel might with equal propriety, and so sinners of mankind might have been saved without an atonement. Had there been no necessity that something should be previously done to witness God's irreconcilable aversion from sin, before such a favour could be bestowed, the Holy Spirit might have been sent in his enlightening and sanctifying operations, and of course all the valuable ends which are now actually answered by the work of Christ and the consequent gifts of the Spirit, might have been fully accomplished without his coming and death ; yea, all these valuable ends might have been brought about to much better advantage, and in a way much more to the glory of the Divine character, without, than by the death of Christ ; because that way of bringing about any good which is least expensive or attended with the least evil and suffering, is both most advantageous to the creature, and honourable to the Creator.

The opinion that the great end of coming and death of Christ was to revive the knowledge of natural religion among men, is a supposition which however it may connect the glory of God and the good of the creature, yet evidently throws the greater weight into the scale of human happiness, and is therefore inconsistent with what has been shown to be the end of God in the creation of the world. For it represents the recovery of sinners as being in itself an object of greater importance than a vindication of the injured honour of God, and implies that to support the dignity of the Divine character as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, was a matter of inferior consideration.

That the government of God may appear respectable and worthy of the high dignity of his character, it is not only necessary that the great laws of his kingdom be perfectly equitable, but that the disposition, the spirit of the Supreme Governor appear perfectly to harmonize with them; otherwise the government of God can no more be either honourable and glorious to himself, or safe and happy to his creatures, than the best civil laws and constitution can to a community when they are neglected and overlooked by the executive authority.

In order, therefore, to support the dignity of the Divine character as the Supreme Governor of the world, it is exceedingly necessary that plenary evidence be exhibited to the universe of a perfect conformity of the Divine mind to the whole of the moral law, the penal as well as the preceptive parts of it. This, however, could not be done, nor this disposition be delineated in the Divine government, were mercy exercised toward sinners, unless some peculiar methods had been adopted in the Divine providence, whereby God might sensibly exhibit his infinite hatred of iniquity, and that too as a necessary step toward the exercise of pardoning mercy.

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### CHAPTER III.

*An inquiry into the design and import of the sacrifices required under the Mosaic dispensation.*

It is evident that sacrifices were of much earlier date than the mosaic law. There is great reason to suppose that they were instituted by God himself,

immediately after the fall, on his giving the gracious promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Several things lead us to suppose that they were originally of Divine institution.

Sacrifices were in actual use from the earliest ages after the fall. We read that God made coats of skins, and clothed Adam and Eve, Gen. iii. 21, who had made themselves naked by their sin. Now there is great reason to suppose that these skins were skins of beasts which were offered in sacrifice to God; and that as God intimated designs of mercy through Christ, the Seed of the woman, he also instituted sacrifices as a type of the great sacrifice which was once for all offered up to God by Christ, and by which sinners have access to God; accordingly we find that very soon "Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof," Gen. iv. 4, and offered unto God. As early also as the time of Noah we find that the distinction of clean and unclean beasts—of such as might and such as might not be offered to God in sacrifice—was known, which could not be without a Divine revelation. For when Noah entered into the ark, he was commanded of every clean beast to take to himself by sevens, Gen. vii. 2; and when he came out of the ark, he builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast and every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour, Gen. viii. 20, 21. On these several accounts the few following things may be observed:

1. That though it be not certain that those beasts, the skins of which were taken to clothe our first parents, were offered in sacrifice to God, it is yet clear that Abel offered the firstlings of his flock in sacrifice, because the fat thereof, which was afterward,

by Divine appointment, peculiarly dedicated to God, was offered up and we find that in after ages not only the fat of the beast that was offered was particularly set apart for God, Lev. iii. 16, but every firstling of clean beasts was to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. Thus it was enjoined on the children of Israel respecting the firstlings of cattle and sheep, that they should remain seven days with the dam, and on the eighth day should be given to God, Exod. xxii. 30. God claimed a peculiar right in all the first-born, and the firstlings of unclean beasts might be redeemed, but the firstlings of a cow, or a sheep, or a goat might not on any consideration be redeemed, but must be offered upon the altar in sacrifice to God, Numb. xviii. 17. The sacrifice itself, and the conformity of so many of its circumstances to the rites which were afterward expressly required by the levitical law, give great reason to suppose that Abel had the authority of a Divine institution for the offering which he made to God.

2. There is not the least reason to suppose that sacrificing of beasts could have been acceptable to God, unless it had been authorized by a Divine appointment. It was not until after the flood, that mankind had any right to make use of the flesh of beasts for common food; before this God had given to man only the trees that bore fruit and the green herb for meat, Gen. i. 29, 30, but after the flood, he enlarged the grant to Noah, who was eminently a type of Christ, and said, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things," Gen. ix. 3. Whence it appears, that man's right of dominion over the beasts, particularly to make use of them for meat, is derived to him through the covenant of grace.

And when it is evident from the holy Scriptures that it is only **by Christ** that sinners have access to God; see Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18; Acts, iv. 12; and that all those modes of worship and means of access to him which are only the fruits of human invention, are abominable in the sight of God, Isa. xxix. 13; Mark. vii. 7; there is not the least reason to suppose that it would ever have entered into the mind of Abel to offer up a beast in sacrifice to God, or that he could have thought that such an offering would be accepted, had he been without the authority of a Divine institution; and much less may we suppose, that had this bodily exercise been a piece of will worship, the mere fruit of his own invention, it would ever have found acceptance with God.

3. As a further evidence that Abel had Divine authority for the sacrifice which he offered to God, we are expressly told that he made his offering by faith, and thereby "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts," Heb. xi. 4. His making his offering by faith, implies that he believed that he might approach his Maker in this way; for, as the apostle asserts, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But it is manifest that he could not have the least reason from any consideration whatever for this belief, but what was derived from some Divine intimation; wherefore, Abel's faith, by which he made his offering, and God's acceptance of it and testimony that he was righteous, are a sufficient stamp of Divine authority for his offering. Abel made his offering by faith, just in the same sense as Moses "kept the passover by faith, and the sprinkling of blood," Heb. xi. 28, which had the express authority of a Divine institution.

But be this as it may, it is sufficiently clear from the New Testament, that the sacrifices of the mosaic institution were designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world; this is fully proved by the apostle, particularly in the 9th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. We may rationally expect, therefore, to find the design and import of sacrifices more fully explained under that dispensation which was particularly intended to prepare the way for the coming and work of Christ.

It appears that the sacrifices of the levitical institution were of two sorts, and generally of a double import; one was an atonement for sin, or a figurative way of expiating crimes, the other an expression of the worship and homage due from creatures to their Creator; and it was by sacrifices of the former kind, that men had access to God for acceptance of the latter; see more particularly Heb. x. 1, 2. In allusion to the legal sacrifices in this latter sense, all acts of Divine worship are styled sacrifices; thus David saith, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," Ps. li. 17; and Paul beseeches christians "by the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God," Rom. xii. 1. But the import of sacrifices in this respect does not particularly concern our present inquiry. As it was the sacrifices for sin that typified the sacrifice of Christ, what it especially concerns us to understand is, the proper and true import of sacrifices as they were used by Divine appointment for making atonement for sin, or as a means of reconciliation.

In regard to these sacrifices, we find that it was established as an invariable and universal rule, that whatever was taken from the herd or from the flock



should be brought to the door of the tabernacle, and there the offender was to lay his hand on the head of the beast which was to be sacrificed, and kill it before the Lord, and the priests were to take of the blood of the beast and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. Thus, as soon as the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness, we are told that "The Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation," Lev. i. 1—5. The law respecting a peace-offering, whether it be of the herd or of the flock, is the same, and the same form and ceremonies are to be observed concerning it; see chap. iii. 1, 2, 6—8, 12, 13. An atonement for sins of ignorance, whether committed by a priest, by a ruler, or by a private person, is to be made in the same way, and all the same ceremonies punctually to be observed in the offering; and if it be by the whole congregation, the elders of the congregation are to lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord, Lev. iv. throughout. And on the great day of yearly sacrifice, when an atonement was to be made for the whole congregation by



the offering of two goats, one for a sin-offering and the other for a scape-goat, the priest was to lay both his hands on the head of the scape-goat, and "confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," Lev. xvi. 21. These were statutes and ordinances to be observed by the children of Israel for ever in all their generations.

These institutions were expressive and significant, and the language and import of them not hard to be understood; for it is to be noted,

I. That the reason why the blood was so essential a part of the sacrifice, was that it eminently signifies the life; accordingly, when Cain had slain his brother, God charges the murder upon him in these words, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," Gen. iv. 10. The first express law we have in the holy Scriptures against murder is also conceived in these terms; "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," Gen. ix. 6. This seems to have been the reason why blood was excepted out of that grant which was first made to men of the brute creation for food. "Every moving thing that liveth," said the Donor, "shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things: but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat," Gen. ix. 3, 4. The reason why blood, which is the life, might not be eaten, is given where God saith, "I will even set my face against the soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people; for the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul," Lev. xvii. 10, 11. Therefore,

sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice round about upon the altar, figuratively imported the offering up of the life to the Lord upon his altar to be consumed by fire.

II. Laying the hand on the head of the beast that was to be sacrificed, implied confession of sin and guilt in the sight of God. On the great day of yearly atonement for sin, the high priest was expressly required to "lay both his hands on the head of the scape-goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." So, when any private person brought his offering for sin, and, laying his hand on the head of the beast, delivered it up for a burnt-offering to be made upon the altar, the several ceremonies which were to be observed in the case, clearly implied confession of sin and desert of evil at the hand of God : and as the life of the transgressor is forfeited by sin, God's acceptance of the life of the beast under these circumstances, plainly contains the idea, that the beast is substituted in the room of him who offers it, and that it dies and is consumed by fire on the altar of the Lord, instead of the transgressor. When it is expressly asserted that it is the blood, or the life, that makes the atonement, and the sinner whose life is forfeited is pardoned and accepted upon his offering the life of the beast over which he has confessed his own sins on the Lord's altar, it will be exceedingly natural to suppose that the beast which is sacrificed is, by Divine appointment, substituted to die and be consumed in the room of the sinner. The killing and sacrificing the beast which was brought as an offering for sin, to make atonement, together with the several ceremonies to be observed relative to it, very significantly expressed both the sinner's conviction

that he himself deserved death, and his faith in God's merciful acceptance of a substitute instead of the person of the transgressor.

III. The fire that consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar, was significant of Divine anger. That this was the case appears from the following considerations :

1. Nothing gives a more acute and pungent sensation of pain than fire. We have no ideas of greater bodily torment than may be produced by fire ; accordingly it is a metaphor abundantly made use of in the holy Scriptures to express the awful nature and greatness of Divine anger, and the intolerable distress it will bring on those upon whom it finally falls. No term is more frequently made use of in the word of God to express Divine anger than fire. Thus the Supreme Being calls upon his people by the prophet, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem : lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings," Jer. iv. 4. Again, "O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it," Jer. xxi. 12. And thus the same prophet laments the evils which God in his righteous anger had brought on his people Israel : "He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel : he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about," Lam. ii. 3. God exhibits his anger under the same metaphor by another of the prophets, when he says to the people, "I will pour out mine indignation upon

thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men and skilful to destroy; thou shalt be for fuel to the fire," Ezek. xxi. 31, 32. Thus also the heathen are threatened, "Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen," &c., Ezek. xxxvi. 5: therefore the prophet Amos exhorts, "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it," Amos v. 6. In a variety of other places is the same metaphor made use of in the Old Testament to express Divine anger.

The same term is abundantly used in the New Testament, both by Christ himself and by the apostles, to denote Divine anger, and the awful effects of it upon the enemies of God. Thus Christ saith to his disciples, in explaining the parable of the tares, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 41, 42. He also exhorts, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," Mark ix. 43, 44. And when he comes to judge the world, he will be "revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. When he sits in judgment, the sentence which he finally passes on his enemies will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41: and the closing scene of all is, that "the devil

who deceived the nations was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Rev. xx. 10. No expression is more frequently made use of in the sacred writings to denote Divine anger than this; and when the anger of God is meant to be represented as exceedingly great, rising even to fury, no other metaphor is so frequently used to represent the terrible nature and awful consequences of it as fire. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein: who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him," Nahum i. 5, 6. And as the term fire, in a great variety of instances, is made use of as a figure in the sacred writings to express Divine anger, there is no instance wherein it evidently appears to be used to express any other affection of the Divine mind.

2. The final destruction of the enemies of God is represented in the holy Scriptures by those sacrifices for sin which were expressly required to be burned. The psalmist saith, "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away," Psa. xxxvii. 20. It was an express law of God that no fat of any sin-offering should be eaten, but that it should all be consumed by fire on the altar, see Lev. iii. 15, 16; and vi. 30; but if the fire that burned on the altar, and consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon it were not an emblem of Divine wrath, the consumption of these sacrifices would not have been a figure of the destruction of God's enemies, and there could have been no propriety in representing the latter under

the image of the former. Had not David considered the fire on the altar as a figure of Divine anger, we have no reason to suppose that he would have represented the effects of this anger on the enemies of God, by the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar of burnt-offering; we have, therefore, reason to conclude, that he viewed the latter as an image of the former; which he could not have done with propriety, unless the fire which consumed these sacrifices were a figure of Divine anger. God himself seems to represent the matter in the same light, where it is said by the prophet, "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea," Isa. xxxiv. 6. Here the awful destruction which was coming on the Idumeans, is represented by their being made a sacrifice, and particularly imaged by those parts of the sin-offering which are consumed by fire upon the Lord's altar.

Thus we see the fire which consumed the sacrifices which were offered upon the altar, represented Divine anger; and the holy flame under the former dispensation, must be continually supplied and fed with sacrifices, otherwise it would burst forth upon the people, and destroy them. So important is it that there should be an exhibition of Divine anger, preparatory to the exercise of pardoning mercy toward the sinner.

The several ceremonies of the sacrifices for sin, under the levitical institution taken together, had a language that was very significant. They implied the Divine anger against the sinner; and that in the judgment of God, the transgressor deserved to die, even that death which was the penalty of the law—that the transgressor was of the same sentiments, and



entertained the same views of his own character and deserts; that he repented of his sins, and justified God and his law in condemning him; and finally, that he fled to and trusted in the mercy of God through an atonement, wherein his righteous anger figuratively burned against him. This seemed to be the plain and natural import of the sacrifices for sin, which were appointed by the levitical law, and of the rites and ceremonies to be observed in offering them.

IV. The sacrifice of beasts, and the atonement thereby made for sin, was manifestly typical of the great sacrifice of Christ, and the atonement which he made for the sins of the world.

That the ancient tabernacle, and all the rites and forms of that worship which was performed in it, were typical, is clearly taught in the New Testament. For, speaking of this tabernacle, the apostle says, "It was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;—but Christ being come an High Priest, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." On which he reasons thus: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God," Heb. ix. 9, 11—14. We here observe, that it was the blood of the ancient sacrifice that was particularly typical, and in this the figure of the great



sacrifice which taketh away the sins of the world, was especially contained. It was the blood of the beast that cleansed from fleshly impurity, and it is the blood of Christ that purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; and seeing it is by his own blood that Christ enters into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for his people, the apostle from thence infers, that it was necessary the earthly tabernacle, and all the ancient patterns of heavenly things, should also be purified with blood, ver. 23.

It is further manifest, that sin-offerings in particular were typical of the offering which Christ made of himself to God, and more eminently so than many of the offerings that were made under the law. For it was prophesied of Christ, that he should make his soul an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 10; that is, make himself a sin-offering: therefore the apostle, speaking of Christ, saith that God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21; and it is evident that Christ was made sin in no other sense than by being made a sin-offering. The apostle also manifestly speaks of Christ as a sin-offering, when he says that he "needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he offered up himself," Heb. vii. 27; and he exhibits Christ under the like character, when he says that he "was once offered up to bear the sins of many," Heb. ix. 28.

These passages sufficiently prove, that the sin-offerings which were under the levitical institution, were particularly and eminently typical of the offering which Christ made of his life to God; and consequently that there was a correspondence of the substance with the shadow, that the reality was

answerable to the image ; otherwise the apostle could not with propriety reason from the latter to the former.

But if there were an exhibition of Divine anger in the sin-offerings which were made under the law ; we have reason to suppose there was also an exhibition of Divine anger in the offering which Christ made of himself for sin. If those sacrifices, in which were contained the most lively image of Divine displeasure against the sinner, were particularly and especially typical of the sacrifice of Christ, this would naturally lead us to conclude, that the sacrifice of Christ was a lively demonstration of the righteous displeasure of God against sinners.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*In which it is inquired whether there be not evidence that Christ died in the room and stead of the sinner.*

It is not necessary, in the present case, to inquire what that death is which the sinner must have suffered, had it not been for the atonement and intercession of Christ ; or to compare the evils which must have come upon the sinner, with those which were actually endured by Christ. But the design is to examine the evidence which the holy Scriptures give us, that the Lord Jesus Christ did, in a strict and proper sense, die in the room and stead of sinners.

This inquiry is very necessary in order to understand the true import of Christ's death ; the relation it had to the law which threatens death to the transgressor, and the influence it has in opening the way for mercy to be exercised toward the sinner. This

will naturally lead to a better understanding of the language of so important an event as it relates to the character and desert of the sinner, and enable us to see in what sense, or in what respects, the law of God is honoured by it.

The expressions of the sacred writings are such as, in their most plain and natural import, convey the idea of Christ's being a substitute, and dying in the room and stead of the sinner; and if the terms made use of by the inspired writers most naturally suggest this idea, this, of course, is the light in which the subject ought really to be viewed. In order to collect the sense of the sacred writers more satisfactorily on the subject, it may be useful to give the several modes of expression which we find in the Scriptures relative to it a distinct and particular consideration.

I. Our Saviour himself tells us, that he "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; and the apostle says, that Christ "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 6. These expressions naturally convey the idea of Christ's life being given up instead of the sinner's; that, when the sinner was condemned by law to die, Christ died in his room. This is the literal meaning of the original terms, which are rendered in our translation, "a ransom for many;" *λυτρον αντι πολλων*, and *αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων* are expressions, which in the Greek naturally convey the idea of a substitute, and suppose one to be in the room and place of another. The word *λυτρον*, which is here translated "ransom," properly signifies the price of redemption, or that on the gift of which the guilty person is delivered from the punishment to which he was exposed. Thus it was a law in Israel, "Ye shall take no satisfaction

for the life of a murderer ; and ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest," Numb. xxxv. 31, 32. In both these places the hebrew word, which is here rendered "satisfaction," is in the Septuagint translation *λυτρον* ; when, therefore, Christ is said to have given himself his life "a ransom for many," *λυτρον αντι πολλων*, or *αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων*, it must mean that he gave up his life instead of those who were condemned to death ; and this is the same as if it had been said, he gave up his life instead of those who were condemned to die. The preposition which is here translated "for many," or for all, must either mean opposition and contrariety, or commutation or the exchange of one thing for another. But it cannot be taken in the former sense, for then it would imply that Christ gave himself, his life, in opposition to the sinner, and in order to render it for ever impossible that the sinner should live ; it must, therefore, be taken in the latter, and then it will imply, that Christ gave his life in the room and stead of the sinner. In this latter sense is the same preposition used by the Seventy, where the king said to the prophet in the case which he had just put to him, "If by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life," 1 Kings xx. 39. So Jehu said, "If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him," 2 Kings x. 24. When any one is said to give himself a ransom for another, it is supposed that he puts himself in the place of the other. Should any one give himself a ransom to redeem a captive, it would suppose that he himself went into captivity ; and should any one give himself, his life a ransom for one who was condemned to die,

it would imply that he died for him, or in his stead : see Pool's Synopsis, and Dr. Whitby on the places. The expressions under consideration manifestly imply that the life of Christ was the price of the sinner's, and that it was given up with this view and for this purpose.

II. There are other passages of Scripture, in which it is not less clearly and fully intimated that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners.

In this light is the case evidently represented by the apostle, where he saith that " Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Peter iii. 18. Here we are expressly taught that Christ, a just Person, suffered for those who are unjust, and who themselves deserved to suffer. And the sufferings of Christ which are here spoken of, are not his humiliation in being born and dwelling with men ; not the temptations of Satan with which he was beset ; not the slanders, the reproaches, the opposition of men, which he had to combat through the whole course of his life ; but his death which he suffered upon the cross. For the apostle, when he had spoken of Christ's suffering for the unjust, in order that we might know what suffering he referred to, immediately adds, " being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." So that the words of the apostle most clearly contain this assertion—That Christ suffered death for those who were condemned to die, that he might bring them to God ; and how could it be more clearly and expressly asserted, without using the very terms themselves, that Christ died, or suffered death in the room and stead of sinners ? Accordingly it is elsewhere asserted, that " Christ died for the ungodly ;" that "while we were yet without strength, Christ died for us," Rom.

v. 6, 8 ; that "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; by whose stripes we are healed," 1 Pet. ii. 24 ; that God "hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21, that he was "delivered" (that is, to death) "for our offences,—delivered up for us all," Rom. iv. 25, and viii. 32 ; and that "even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7. These passages import that the life of Christ was offered up in sacrifice for the sins of men, and that it was by the sacrifice of himself that he redeemed sinners from destruction, this being their ransom, or the price of their redemption ; and all this is perfectly correspondent with the prophecies which went before concerning him ; for Isaiah, in the spirit of prophecy, says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 4—6.

Further ; it is expressly asserted that Christ became a curse for us. Paul says that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. These words imply, that he was a substitute for us in suffering, that he suffered evil in our stead ; be the evils, which were implied in the curse which Christ suffered, what they may, still they were evils. We cannot separate the idea of evil from a curse, especially the curse of God ; from those evils which are implied in the curse of the law Christ has redeemed his people, by being made a curse for them. It is hence evident, that Christ in his suffering on the cross, was a substitute for the sinner ; and however different the evils which Christ suffered were, from those which the sinner must have suffered had the curse of the law fallen in its full weight upon him ;



still whatever evils he did actually suffer were endured in the room and stead of sinners ; for it was by becoming, or by being made a curse, that Christ redeemed his people.

In whatever way Christ's becoming, or being made a curse, was essential to the recovery of sinners, or whatever influence it actually has in their recovery ; we have, nevertheless, sufficient authority to conclude that it has influence in this great event, and is essential to it. For if Christ's becoming a curse has no influence, and were not essential to the sinner's being redeemed from the curse, we can see no reason why the apostle should so particularly ascribe our redemption to Christ's becoming a curse ; and the passage which is quoted from the Old Testament in the proof of Christ being made a curse, shows that this was in his dying on the cross : " For," says the apostle, " it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Hence it plainly appears, that Christ endured evil, suffered a curse, and died in the room and place of sinners, in order to redeem them from the curse of the law. We can hardly conceive how any thing should be said which would more fully imply Christ's suffering and dying in the room of sinners. Christ's being made a substitute for sinners, and dying in their stead, can hardly be expressed in stronger, or more direct terms than these ; that he " died for the ungodly ; died for us ; suffered the just for the unjust ; bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; redeemed us from the curse of the law ; being made a curse for us ; was made sin for us ; sacrificed for us," and the like.

Should it be said, that one person became a surety for another, that he was bound, imprisoned, made a victim for him, no one would be at any loss to determine the meaning of the expressions. All would



immediately conceive that the surety was bound, imprisoned, made a victim in the room and stead of the offender. This would be the construction which the common sense of mankind would universally put on such expressions in the case before us ; for one person to become bound for another, or subject himself to any evil or penalty for him, is in a strict and proper sense to substitute himself, and put himself in the place of the delinquent. By a parity of reason, therefore, and by all just rules of construction, we must suppose that the variety of expressions made use of in the holy Scriptures, relative to the design and reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, do indeed imply that he substituted himself in the place of sinners, and died in their room and stead.

That Christ should himself become the price of the sinner's redemption ; that he should give himself, his life, a ransom for sinners ; that he should be made sin, suffer, die, and be sacrificed for them, are expressions which convey a sense too plain to be easily evaded ; and if these and such expressions do not imply that, for some reason or other, Christ verily substituted himself, and subjected himself to suffering and death in the room and place of sinners, it will be difficult to find language, to invent terms, which would fully and unequivocally express this idea of the end of his death.

It being then admitted that Christ did really die in the room and stead of sinners ; the following remarks naturally offer themselves :

1. That the death and sacrifice of Christ had an especial and peculiar relation to the penal part of the law of God. It is acknowledged that a humble spirit and a broken heart, are frequently termed sacrifices in the holy Scriptures ; and one principal reason

of it, probably is the correspondent views which were contained in such exercises with the plain language, the natural import of the sacrifices of atonement which were made for sin under the law. The broken spirit which David considers as the acceptable sacrifice to God, Ps. li. 17, implied an acknowledgement of the righteousness of the Divine law, and a hope and trust in the mercy of God through an atonement; and, as this was but the obvious implication of the levitical sacrifices, the term itself, by a very easy and natural transition, might be carried to the temper of mind with which the literal sacrifices were to be made. But literal sacrifices themselves are necessary only for sinners, they are instituted only in case of guilt, and where the law is broken; had there been no sin, no sacrifice would have been required. The sacrifices under the law, in all cases wherein they were to be used, supposed that offences had been committed; and only in cases of offence were sacrifices of atonement appointed. Where sin had not been committed, there was no need of either confession of guilt in the creature or testimony of displeasure in the Creator, but, where it had, both were necessary in order to reconciliation; and both these, we are to remember, were implied in the sacrifices of the law, and equally so in the sacrifice of Christ.

The law of God, in the penal part of it, has no demands on the righteous, but sin brings us under obligation to punishment. The preceptive part of the law immediately and continually respects every creature, lying equally on every one, with all its binding force: but not so as to the penal; this immediately respects only the transgressor, having a relation to him, and a demand on him, which it has not on the innocent. And, as sacrifices of atonement are

necessary only in cases of transgression, it is hence evident, that they have a more immediate reference to the penalties, than to the preceptive parts of the Divine law. As far, therefore, as there is a similitude and unity of design between the sacrifices of the law and the sacrifice of Christ, so far the latter as well as the former had a more immediate reference to the sanctions of the law. As far as the latter was prefigured by the former, so far the penal rather than the preceptive parts of the law were regarded in it.

2. It appears from the preceding observations that Christ was a sacrifice in his ignominious death in a different sense from what he was in his holy and obedient life. However necessary it was that Christ should live a perfectly pure and holy life in order to the acceptableness of the sacrifice which he made of himself in his death, (as this indeed was absolutely necessary,) still his death was a sacrifice in a different sense from that of his obedient life. Sin-offerings, under the former dispensation, were to be made only of clean beasts, and those, too, such as were without blemish; yet these beasts, clean and unblemished, were to be offered up in sacrifice to God. So Christ, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God," Heb. ix. 14. Therefore, his people are said to be redeemed from their vain conversation "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 19; and as the redemption which Christ has obtained for his people is ascribed to his blood, or his death, as its procuring cause, we are naturally led to consider the sacrifice he made of himself as consisting in a peculiar and distinguishing manner in his death.

Agreeably to this view of the matter, Christ, "who knew no sin," is said to have been "made sin for us,"

2 Cor. v. 21, which can be true in no other sense than being made a sin-offering; and that it was not in his obedient life, but his ignominious death, that Christ was made a sin-offering, seems naturally to be suggested by the distinction which the apostle makes between his first and second appearing. He says, "As it is appointed unto men once to die—so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 27, 28.

We know not in what respects Christ will appear the second time without sin, any more than he did the first, excepting it be that at his second coming he will not make his soul or his life an offering for sin; and it is exceedingly plain that sufferings and death have a more direct and immediate relation to the sanctions of the law than obedience.

3. It may be remarked further, that the same character, the same disposition of the Deity, which would have appeared in the death of the sinner, was designed to be exhibited in the death of Christ. It has been before observed, that it is essential to the glory of God that the spirit of the law be perfectly adhered to, and fully maintained in his administration of government. Hence, and hence only, arose the necessity of the sinner's death. Had not the former been necessary, neither would the latter. Had it not been necessary that the same character should appear, and be fully and perfectly preserved in governing, as was naturally exhibited by the laws which were originally established as the rules of Divine government, we could discern no necessity of even the sinner's death. But, seeing there is an obvious necessity of this, we easily see why it must be that the soul which sins should also die. If, therefore, the Saviour

died in the room and stead of the sinner, we cannot rationally suppose otherwise than that, in this remarkable event, the same Divine disposition was delineated, and the same character exhibited, which would have appeared in the death of the sinner.

4. The principal design of the death of Christ was not to discover the perfection of his personal obedience, and to bestow on it a lustre with which it could not otherwise have shone. It is confessed that this is an end not only worthy of being an object, but which also was very advantageously answered by the death of Christ. Still, it is evident that this was not the only, or even principal, object in view in this great event. For Christ to die in order to discover the immoveable strength of his disposition to obey God, and to die in the room and stead of those who must otherwise have fallen victims to Divine wrath, are not precisely one and the same thing, nor do they exhibit the character of the great Governor of the world exactly in the same point of light. The death of the sinner is a glass in which we see the righteousness, the punitive justice of God,—so also is the death of Christ. In the former we have a view of righteousness as it relates to the execution of punishment,—so also in the latter, if it be true that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, and that his death had a more direct and immediate relation to the sanction of the moral law.

The death of Christ discovered his own righteousness, not merely as it relates to protecting the innocent, but also to punishing the guilty; not only as it respects rewarding the virtuous, but bringing evil on the wicked; otherwise we cannot see how it could be said with propriety that he was made sin or a sin-offering for us. Righteousness is a general term,

which relates to law and government ; it equally regards the sanctions, as the precepts of the law, and as really respects the execution of punishments, as the bestowment of rewards. Christ's becoming a "curse" for us, and dying in our room and stead, as truly imply that he suffered for us, as any thing said in the holy Scriptures supposes that he obeyed the law for us ; and, when he is called the Lord our righteousness, the term is to be taken in a large and general sense, as relating both to the precepts and the sanctions of the Divine law, and is to be considered as regarding government as it is supported both by the execution of punishments and the bestowment of rewards. So also, when the righteousness of the law is spoken of as being fulfilled in christians, Rom. viii. 4, the term is to be taken in a general sense, and is to be considered as having respect to law in general, as well the penal as the preceptive parts of it, otherwise we could not see how the honour and dignity of the Divine government could be preserved, and yet the guilty go unpunished.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Showing the necessity of Christ's perfect obedience in order to his making atonement for sin, and the influence which his personal righteousness has in procuring pardon for the sinner.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the evidence there is that Christ died in the room and stead of sinners, and that the crimes of men are expiated by the sufferings of Christ, it is to be remembered that there is no merit or atoning virtue merely in sufferings. Pain and



distress have no moral virtue in them, and are of no importance, otherwise than as means through which the beauty of the Divine character, and the true disposition of the Divine mind, may be seen by his creatures. For, as all the Divine administration is fitted to exhibit the character of God, if punishments did not answer this end, they would never be made use of. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the sufferings of the sinner in no other way than as they serve to exhibit the righteous character of God, and prove him to be a hater of iniquity. Were not this the case, the moral character of the Man Jesus Christ would not have been of so great importance to his being made an offering for sin, but his whole worth as a sacrifice must be estimated by his capacity to endure pain.

The worth of the sacrifice which Christ made of himself for the sins of the world arises from the moral excellences of his person and character. Were not this the case, the same quantity of sufferings endured by a person of inferior character would have equally answered the end of obtaining pardon for the sinner. It is true, indeed, that for a person of Christ's dignity and worth to endure greater degrees of pain, is of more importance than enduring less, yet the value, the import, in a moral view of his sufferings, be they either greater or less, arises from his personal worth and character.

This being the case, it was absolutely necessary, in order to the atonement he was about to make, by once offering up himself to God, that his life and character should be most perfectly pure and spotless, otherwise in his death he could not have been an offering of a sweet savour to God. This, we are naturally led to suppose, was a reason why the sin-offerings that were



made under the former dispensation, were expressly required to be of the clean beasts, and no other would be accepted. For God expressly declares, "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing," Mal. i. 14. God's acceptance of an offering, and his being reconciled to the offender, were upon the express condition that the sacrifice was made only of beasts that were clean; and the design of this law was not only to teach the duty and obligation of devoting our best services, and giving up the best we have to God, but more clearly and perfectly to prefigure that glorious sacrifice which Christ made of himself to God for the sins of the world. Hence the apostle says, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26. The dignity and excellency of the character of Christ, and these only, put infinite value on the sacrifice which he made of himself for the sins of the world; and on this account it was, that God was pleased to smell a sweet savour in the offering. Had there been the least blemish or imperfection in the character of Christ, his blood would be as far from cleansing from sin as that of bulls and goats; and his sufferings, however great in kind or degree, would have been of no avail to obtain pardon for the smallest transgression.

An angry tyrant may have his rage appeased by suffering, his revenge glutted by blood; but not so with the infinitely pure and glorious Governor of the world, who hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. An exhibition of the glories of his character, the infinite strength and purity of his love, is the great end in view, in all the pain and misery he brings on his creatures. The sufferings of Christ, therefore,

aside from the moral excellences of his character, his most perfect and virtuous obedience under them, could not have been of the least worth in the sight of God, because neither the wisdom nor righteousness of God, in his regard to the general good, could have been seen in the Father's laying on him the iniquities of us all.

But the necessity of the obedience of Christ, in order to his making atonement for sin, is further evident from such considerations as these .

1. The perfect obedience of Christ was a necessary and glorious attestation to the righteousness and equity of the moral law.

Mercy to the sinner necessarily implies that the law by which he is condemned is just and righteous ; and, without a full and perfect acknowledgment of this, Christ could neither consistently intercede for mercy to transgressors, nor the Father bestow it. Until this point was fully acknowledged and established, there could be no room for reconciliation, because every exercise of mercy without this would be an implicit confession of undue severity in the law. Therefore Christ himself says, that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled," Matt. v. 18. But, to behold a person of such high dignity as the Lord Jesus Christ, and of so transcendently excellent a character, perfectly obeying the Divine law, and exhibiting in himself, and that under the most trying scenes, a most perfect pattern of that cheerful obedience and unreserved submission which is required of men, affords a strong testimony to the righteousness of that law under which men were originally placed, and is fitted to convince us that every breach of it deserves the curse. No pattern, no example,

could possibly carry stronger evidence of this than the holy and obedient life of Christ.

Such a testimony to the righteousness of the law was but a proper and necessary acknowledgment to be made to God, by him who undertook to mediate peace between God and men. Without this it could not have appeared that Christ in every thing justified God, and wholly condemned the sinner ; and had not the Man Jesus Christ most perfectly justified God, and condemned the sinner, his offering up himself upon the cross, instead of being a sweet incense, would only have been falling a victim to the just indignation of an injured Sovereign.

But when Christ, "being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death ;" when his death was an expression of the high sense he entertained of the excellency and righteousness of the moral law, the sacrifice he made of himself was then an offering of a sweet savour unto God, and naturally prepared the way for a treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and men ; and the perfect obedience of Christ under all the sufferings he endured on earth, especially in the last and extreme scenes of his life, was peculiarly honourable and acceptable to God, as it carried the fullest acknowledgment of the righteousness of the Divine government in the execution of vengeance on its enemies.

When we take a view of the nature, design, and greatness of the sufferings of Christ, it will appear that his voluntarily subjecting himself to them, and his ready, cheerful, and patient obedience under them, were what really constituted the whole moral worth of the sacrifice which he made of himself for the sins of the world. The bare distress and pain of the Saviour, in themselves simply considered, had no virtue in

them, and were of no worth ; but the disposition of mind with which he endured those extreme agonies and pains, the temper he expressed under them, were of infinite worth. These were, therefore, precious in the sight of God, and worthy to be acknowledged by Christ's being raised to that high station of honour and glory to which he is now exalted ; therefore, his present exaltation and reign are spoken of by the apostle as the reward of his voluntary humiliation and obedience unto death. Treating on this subject he says of Christ, " Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross : wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 8—11. Christ's real merit of the high station he now possesses consisted not in the extremity of his sufferings, but the perfection of his obedience. It is not, strictly speaking, for the pains he endured, but for the views and temper of mind he manifested under them, that the Man Jesus Christ is raised to universal dominion, and has angels, men, and devils subject to his authority.

2. That God should be manifest in flesh, and voluntarily lay down his life for his people, and become a curse for them, not only strongly attests the righteousness of the Divine law as a rule of government, but abundantly proves that the disposition of the Divine mind invariably conforms to the rules of equity and righteousness ; that this should be done, was a matter of infinite importance to the honourable exercise of mercy. It is far from being enough that the rules of

Divine government should be such as approve themselves to the consciences of men, and carry conviction of their equity; but seeing that God will for ever maintain the dignity and honour of his own character, when he was about to do so wonderful a thing as to pardon and save sinners, it was of the last importance that he should exhibit a character, a disposition of mind, perfectly conformable to the true spirit of those rules of government which he had previously established; otherwise, though the law might appear just, God himself could not appear so in justifying the ungodly.

But the scene of the sufferings of the Son of God abundantly displayed this character of Jehovah, this disposition of the Divine mind, which it could not have done, in such a manner as to lay a foundation for mercy to sinners, had not the character, the obedience of the Mediator, been absolutely spotless and perfect.

However voluntary Christ was in laying down his life, the hand and agency of the Father are by no means to be overlooked in this remarkable event. Though the Son made his soul an offering for sin, the Father bruised him, put him to grief, and laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6, 10, the hand and the agency of God were as truly conspicuous, and his providence as active, in bringing suffering, distress, and death on the Son of his love, as in any evil he doth, or ever will, bring on sinners.

The case being thus, it is easy to see that, unless the moral character of Christ had been absolutely perfect, that exhibition of Divine righteousness, which was made in his sufferings and death, could afford no more reason for mercy to sinners, than that which is made in the destruction of sinners themselves. For

a manifestation of righteousness in bringing evil upon one whose moral character is not perfect, is so far from exhibiting a reason why the wicked should go unpunished, that it rather enforces the necessity of their punishment. Therefore, that the sufferings of Christ might be such a manifestation of Divine righteousness as would open the way for God to appear just in justifying the ungodly, it was of absolute necessity that he himself should be without sin, and that guile should not be found in his mouth. Then his taking the curse upon himself, and the Father's laying it on him, will be so bright a display of Divine righteousness, as to render God's regard to law, to good order, and government, gloriously conspicuous in the exercise of mercy to such as penitently fly for refuge to the Saviour of the world.

If it be admitted that God's regard, particularly to the penal part of his law, was designedly manifested in the sufferings and death of Christ, it is easy to see that this regard to the law would become conspicuous in proportion to the dignity and excellency of him who suffered. For, as on the one hand we estimate the benevolence that is expressed in the bestowment of good, partly by the meanness and unworthiness of the subject on whom it is conferred, so, on the other, the degree of displeasure which is expressed in bringing evil is estimated greatly by the dignity and excellency of the person on whom it falls. The same measure of natural evil, the same quantity of pain, is expressive of very different degrees of displeasure, according to the difference of character and dignity in the person on whom it is inflicted. For a king to imprison his son for a crime awes his subjects more than the execution of a common felon, and may do more to establish his authority, and gain respect to his



government ; the reason is, that his regard to the rights of his government is more strongly painted in the former case than in the latter. So, for God to inflict pain upon a mere man, would naturally express displeasure to spectators ; but, in the same degree of evil brought on him who is his fellow, his anger would glow in brighter and more awful colours, and strike the spectators with a reverence and fear which the other instance could not beget.

Therefore, the absolute perfection, as well as dignity of the moral character of Christ, when he was about to offer up his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, were of the utmost importance to the acceptableness of his offering, and the manifestation which it was necessary should be made of God's righteous displeasure against those for whom he died. For, without this absolute perfection and high dignity of the character of the Saviour, his death on the cross would not have been a glass in which the Divine purity could have been discovered with sufficient clearness, while he exercised mercy toward sinners.

3. The perfect obedience of Christ, and that even unto death, and the spotless purity of his moral character, were absolutely necessary to prepare him for interceding with the Father for the sinner.

The dignity and excellency of an intercessor's character add weight and give importance to his intercession. It is more honourable to a prince to pardon upon the intercession of some illustrious person than on that of one of his menial servants ; and when the penalty, for the remission of which intercession is made, is perfectly deserved, and the honour of the sovereign is concerned in its infliction, it is necessary that the intercession itself should carry in it the fullest acknowledgments, both of the



righteousness of the judge, and the justice of the punishment. For without this the intercession itself might justly be interpreted as a reflection on the sovereign, and a vindication of the criminal. This being the case, the intercessor naturally, in some sense, puts on the character and takes the place of him who is condemned.

But when we consider the glorious and infinite majesty of God on one hand, and the extreme guilt and inexpressible vileness of the sinner on the other, we cannot but see the absolute importance of the fullest acknowledgments, both of God's righteousness and the sinner's guilt, in him who steps in as a mediator between them, however dignified he be in his own personal character. None but a person of the most exalted character would be equal to the weight of such a mediation; and one who suitably estimated the infinitely different characters, qualities, and stations of the beings, between whom he was to mediate a peace, would never presume to appear before the great God without the fullest testimonials of a high and perfect sense of the Divine righteousness, on the one hand, and the extreme guilt and wickedness of the sinner, on the other. But how could these testimonials be so well obtained, and where could such views, both of God's righteousness and the sinner's guilt, be so strongly painted, as in Christ's obedience unto death, even the death of the cross? In this view of the matter, nothing like the death of Christ could pave the way for him to the Father, and nothing like his own blood could give weight to his intercession.

For so illustrious a person as the infinite Redeemer, to exemplify his regard to the honour of God and his law, by a most perfect obedience under the most

unparalleled sufferings, even unto death, and his sense of the sinner's ill desert by appearing before the eternal God in his own blood, must wonderfully qualify him for so important a mediation, and, above every thing, give weight to his intercession. It is no wonder that God does not reject an intercession which does such honour to his law and government, and makes his character appear so glorious in the exercise of mercy to sinners.

Thus we see how a person of Christ's most excellent character prepared himself for acting the part of an Intercessor for sinners, and the trying scenes he voluntarily went through to qualify himself for so weighty and important an office, and all this was necessary to render himself acceptable in the eyes of the Father, in the character of Mediator, and to gain an audience in a cause of such a nature as that which he had undertaken.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Showing the ends which are answered by the sufferings of Christ, and what is the import of them.*

As none of the providences of God are without their instruction, calamities have an import as well as other dispensations; and, if there be a language in the sufferings which are brought on moral beings, greater degrees of distress and pain are more significant than smaller ones, and expressive of higher emotions in him who inflicts them. Although, therefore, it be admitted that the end and import of the sufferings of

Christ cannot be collected merely from their greatness, this, however, is a consideration which may not be without its use in investigating a subject of so much importance. Greatness of sufferings gives a colouring to things, which is not found in smaller degrees of distress, and naturally raises the ideas, both with respect to the avenger and the sufferer.

Were the sufferings of Christ no more, nor greater, than would naturally and necessarily affect human animal nature in that trying situation in which he was placed, and in which he expired, they would still have a language, an import in them. But were there superadded to these, peculiar agonies and distresses, this most surprising event immediately puts on a different hue, and the language of it is written in deeper colours.

In order to a clearer understanding of the design of the sufferings of Christ, it may be of use to attend particularly to the descriptions given of them by the sacred writers, and the manner in which they are represented, that we may from thence be enabled to form some estimate of their weight and greatness.

The whole life of Christ, especially his public ministry, was a scene of labour and suffering; but at the close of it his sufferings became much more severe and intense. Accordingly, in regard of sufferings, this period is spoken of with an emphasis, both by Christ and his apostles. Thus, when the Jews laid violent hands on the Saviour, he says, "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53; hereby intimating that now he was in a peculiar manner given up into the hands of the powers of darkness. For this reason it manifestly was that the prospect of what he had to

endure when he was to make his soul an offering for sin, was so extremely trying and affecting to him. This last trying and affecting scene appeared to lie with great and peculiar weight on the Saviour's mind, and he ever spoke of it with peculiar emotion. When he told his disciples that he came to send fire on the earth, he immediately adds, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !" Luke xii. 50. Accordingly, when he went into the garden where he was taken by his enemies, though just before he possessed the utmost composure, he was immediately seized with horror, and said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;" and this sorrow broke forth into this earnest, pathetic cry, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But that it might not be thought that his spirit failed him, and that his soul shrunk back from the sufferings it was necessary he should endure, he immediately adds, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," Matt. xxvi. 38, 39. This scene is prophetically described by the psalmist in the following manner, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me ; I found trouble and sorrow : then I called upon the name of the Lord ; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul," Ps. cxvi. 3, 4. One evangelist relates that, upon Christ's coming into the garden, "he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy," Mark xiv. 33 ; and another, that upon his earnest cry for deliverance, if it might be the will of God, an angel was sent to him from heaven, to support and strengthen him under his distresses ; and that he was in agony in his prayer, and "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke xxii. 43, 44. Soon after this, his enemies came upon him, being

conducted to the place of his retirement by one of his professed friends, and took him by violence, and carried him before the rulers, where he suffered the grossest indignity and abuse. Here he was treated with the utmost derision and contempt; mocked, spit upon, and cruelly smitten. Finally, after sentence of death had been passed upon him, he was led out of the city, and like the vilest malefactors nailed to the cross. There, after he had hung a number of hours on the accursed tree, and endured the sore revilings and cruel taunts of his enemies, as if given up of God himself, in whom he had ever trusted, he pathetically cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. Upon this, nature itself sinking under so dreadful a weight, the mighty Redeemer bowed his sorrowful head, and gave up the ghost.

The affecting description given us by the psalmist of these unparalleled sufferings, may assist us in judging of their nature, and estimating their greatness. After this manner they are prophetically described: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.—I

am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death," Psa. xxii. 1—15.

On this description of the sufferings of Christ, we remark :

1. That it represents his misery as being exceedingly great. Language can hardly paint a scene more full of horror and distress, or represent more keen and pungent anguish. No account is given us in any part of the sacred writings of sufferings to be compared with those of the Lord of glory. Admitting the description to be just, and without a figure, we must necessarily suppose that pain and sorrow arose to such a height in the Man Jesus Christ, as is beyond the power of a mere human mind to endure.

2. The above description evidently represents the sufferings of Christ as being peculiarly great, and attended with some singular circumstances, which gave an edge to his sorrow. The amazement which took hold on him before the arrival of his enemies, the agony into which he fell while in the garden, and his repeated and fervent importunities that the cup he was about to drink might, if possible, pass from him, are all indications of evils in prospect far greater than those of a mere separation of soul and body. Just before, he appeared with great calmness and composure, instituting the sacrament of the supper, and communing with his disciples in it. But, in a few moments, without any visible cause from any difference of external circumstances, he discovers great perturbation of spirit, and was in such agony of mind, as was too much for nature to bear. This must certainly have arisen from some invisible cause; nor



can it be accounted for any otherwise than by supposing that it arose from the immediate hand of God. These circumstances would naturally suggest to the disciples, that there was something far more trying to the mighty Saviour in that scene of sorrow which was before him, than either the mere indignity he suffered from men, or the pangs of natural death. The pains of death were, soon after, suffered by his disciples, without any such complaint, and the prospect of suffering death for the sake of Christ, and in his cause, was so far from being terrifying and distressing, that it was rather joyful and comforting to them. Accordingly, when the Lord sent Ananias to Saul, afterwards called Paul, to perform a miraculous cure upon him, he tells him that this Saul was a chosen vessel unto the Lord, to bear his name among the gentiles, and says, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake," Acts ix. 16. The strong crying and tears, therefore, of the Saviour, and the mighty agonies into which he fell before his death, together with his most affecting exclamation on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" when compared with the patience, serenity, and fortitude with which his disciples afterward suffered death for his sake, must strongly indicate distress and pains peculiar to Him "who made his soul an offering for sin." Be the occasion or especial reason of these sufferings what it may, it is manifest that there was something very peculiar in the sufferings themselves, and that they had an unparalleled sharpness in them. What can be more dishonourable to the character and dignity of Christ, especially as he is held forth as the most perfect pattern of meekness and patience under sufferings, than to suppose his distress and anguish did



not rise to an height far exceeding any thing that was ever endured by a mere man? We have no other way to reconcile his bitter cries and complaints with that patience, that quiet resignation for which he is so much celebrated in the word of God, than by magnifying his sufferings and heightening our ideas of their weight and greatness.

3. It is, therefore, natural to suppose that the principal pains endured by the Lord of glory in that hour of darkness were seated particularly in his mind; that the views of mind which then possessed him were far more distressing than the pains of mere animal sensitive nature. If that forsaking of God, which occasioned his bitter exclamation on the cross, was merely his being given up into the power of wicked men to be put to death, we can see nothing more dreadful in it than merely his suffering the pains of dying. We have, therefore, reason to suppose that such views of things, such a sense of the awful and terrible nature of Divine wrath, then crowded in upon him, and filled his pure and holy mind, as quite overwhelmed him with sorrow, and were far more insupportable than the pangs of natural death. Thus might he be said eminently to be "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." All the concomitant circumstances of his death, especially when compared with the behaviour of his followers under the sufferings they endured for his sake, very naturally concur to suggest these ideas concerning the sufferings of Christ.

Having thus taken a view of the sufferings themselves which our Lord underwent, in order to understand the import of them we may, in the first place, consider the agency of God in them, and then the

evidence we have of their being expressions of Divine anger.

I. We may consider the agency of God in the sufferings of Christ. Though Christ was God as well as man, and it was indeed God that was manifest in flesh, yet so long as he was in the world, he acted in a subordinate capacity, put on the form of a servant, and subjected himself to the will and government of his Father who was in heaven. Christ in his whole person, however dignified by being peculiarly and eminently the Son of God, was a servant, and became obedient; and every circumstance of his life is to be attributed to the providential government of God, as truly, and in as high a sense, as the circumstances of the lives of mere men.

On this ground we observe,

1. That God brought on the Man Jesus Christ all the sufferings which he endured. His hand was not less visible, nor his power and providence less active, in bringing sufferings and death on his only begotten Son, than on sinners of mankind; nor indeed was the governing providence of God less concurrent and active in bringing pain and distress on Jesus Christ, than it is in bringing evils on impenitent sinners, either in this world or the world to come. This is manifest, as well from the language in which this event is spoken of in the word of God, as from the nature and reason of things. Thus it is said, "Jehovah laid on him the iniquities of us all," and "it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief," Isa. liii. 6, 10. God also saith, by the prophet, relative to this event, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall

be scattered," Zech. xiii. 7. Therefore the apostle Peter acknowledges the death of Christ to be the effect of the hand and determinate counsel of God ; and that, though men crucified him with wicked hands, they nevertheless did no more than what the hand and counsel of God determined to be done, Acts iv. 28.

It would be very inconsistent, both with reason, and the plain and natural import of these Scripture expressions, to suppose that He who is only God, the original and supreme Governor of the world, suspended, even in the least degree, that agency which had hitherto been unremitted and universal, and that he stepped aside and stood as a mere spectator of this horrid scene. If this were the case, how it could with propriety have been predicted, that God should smite and bruise and put him to grief, and afterwards be acknowledged that his sufferings and death were the effects of the hand and determinate counsel of God, is not easy to be comprehended. Were it so, that the hand and power of God were less active in bringing those evils on Christ, than in any other evils brought on moral beings, it is not easy to see why Christ, who, in the character of mediator, always considered himself as a servant, and acknowledged subjection to God, should yet cry to Him for help and deliverance. It is evident, therefore, that whatever evils were endured by Christ, were from the hand of that God between whom and men he acted as mediator. All the sufferings he endured were from his active power and providence ; they were as much from the hand of God as any evils that were ever brought on any of the human race.

2. All the conduct of God, in his providential government over his creatures, is expressive, and hath a language in it. None of the providences of God

are without meaning, but are all instructive and significant; they exhibit the same uniform and glorious character that is held up in his word. The same purposes and designs, the same most perfect and excellent disposition, which are expressed in words in the holy Scripture, are delineated and exemplified in facts in his providential government. The Divine character is described in words in the sacred oracles, and exhibited in facts in his providence and works; and the character itself is not less legible, nor its excellences less visible or conspicuous, in the latter than in the former. The real character, the general disposition of the Divine mind, is not less obvious in what he does, than in what he says; nor could it easily be accounted for that it should be otherwise, while one great end of his word is to explain the reasons of his conduct, the rule of his providential government: and as the glory of God really appears in the perfect correspondence of his actual government with those laws of his kingdom which are taught us in his word, so every part of the Divine conduct toward intelligent creatures expresses the same general character which is marked out in the promises and threatenings of revelation.

3. This being the case, it is manifest that there is no part of the Divine conduct toward moral creatures but what is expressive, either of his approbation of righteousness or hatred of iniquity. It is the glory of God that he loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. This is absolutely essential to his goodness and love. Without this, his disposition to promote the general and the greatest good could not possibly be perfect, and if such a disposition as this possesses the Divine mind, there can be no part of the Divine conduct but what is expressive of it. It must be

that in all the good and the evil which he brings on the subjects of his moral government, he invariably exhibits this most pure and perfect goodness; adjusting all his providential dispensations in such a manner, and in such perfect wisdom, as naturally to carry the marks of it, and sensibly to express to rational beings either his approbation of virtue, or his hatred of vice.

This brings us to show, in the next place,

II. That the sufferings and death of Christ were expressions of Divine anger.

There is nothing in the word of God to lead us to suppose that evils brought on moral beings are not, in every instance, expressive of Divine anger; but a variety of things that evidently prove the contrary. For,

1. The law and the promise of God secure the innocent from every positive evil, every infelicity, which doth not necessarily result from the mere natural imperfection of the creature. The word of God is full of promises to the righteous, and there is no mention any where made of evil but in case of transgression. God blessed our first parents in their estate of innocence, and gave not the least intimation of any evil that should befall them, unless they rebelled against him. Such was the nature of the covenant, the tenour of the law, under which they were placed, that it absolutely secured them from every positive evil; and particularly from so great an evil as natural death, in case they continued in their obedience. Therefore the apostle considers temporal death as a certain proof that the subject of it is a sinner. He says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. As sin

brought death into the world, so this still gives it universal dominion. As it was originally a testimony of Divine anger, it still continues to be so. That death is a curse, is evident from this, if nothing else, that the death of Christ is brought, by the inspired apostle, as a proof that he became a curse : see Gal. iii. 13.

But it is evident, that the law of God secures the innocent, not only from death, but from every other positive evil. The apostle saith, “ Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt,” Rom. iv. 4. Where the obedience is perfect, the reward is due by law ; the law, under which man was originally placed, secures it ; and it is not considered as an act of grace to confer it : and if the reward here spoken of imply a deliverance from all positive evils, and a security against them ; if it intend a happiness as complete as the natural imperfection of the creature will admit,—then, of course, the law, the established rule of Divine government, certainly secures the innocent from every such evil, and ascertains to him all possible good. But, if the Divine law thus protect the innocent, and secure him against evil, then all positive evils brought on moral beings must certainly proclaim the Divine anger, and prove that some iniquity has taken place.

If the law of God do not certainly secure the innocent from all evils,—if there are evils to which such may be exposed and subjected, which nevertheless are not the objects of a curse, and that too the curse of God’s law,—there is no security that they who are redeemed by Christ shall ever be delivered from all evil, because his redemption is effectual to deliver only from the curse of the law. Christ hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law, but from no other evils than such as they are doomed to by his



curse. If, therefore, the law do not secure the innocent from evil and sufferings, neither does the gospel secure the believer; and, of course, if sufferings are not invariable testimonies of Divine displeasure, we neither should have had any security against them, had we remained innocent, nor can we now obtain any security against them by being interested in the redemption purchased by Christ. Yet we find it expressly declared, concerning those who are redeemed by Christ, that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi. 4. Accordingly,

2. Positive evils, we find, are invariably the subjects of a threatening; with these God threatens his enemies. There is no evil to which human nature is subjected in the present world, or to which men are exposed in the future, but what is comprised in some one of the threatenings of the word of God. Therefore, though peace and happiness are promised to the righteous, the Lord proclaims, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Isa. iii. 11. And it is of great importance that we view the subject in this light, in order that we may be convinced that the evils we suffer in this life are indeed so many testimonies of God's righteous displeasure against us. God never threatens evils, excepting in the cases of offence, and never brings evils in the execution of the great and original laws of his kingdom, but on those who transgress; and, if this be true, it manifestly proves that all positive evils are certain expressions of Divine anger.

3. The holy Scriptures clearly and very evidently teach us, that the sufferings and death of Christ were



expressions of Divine anger. By the prophet Zechariah, God calls upon his sword to awake against Christ, and commissions it to take away his life in the following words, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered,” Zech. xiii. 7. That Christ is the shepherd here spoken of is evident from this, that he was many times prophesied of under that title, and frequently styled himself the Shepherd, the true Shepherd, while he was upon earth, and had that title often given him by the apostles after his ascension ; and that the words under consideration had reference to the death of Christ, and were an express prediction of it, is manifest from the application which he himself makes of them, on the night on which he was betrayed. When Christ went out to the mount of Olives, after the institution of the sacramental supper, he says to his disciples, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered,” Matt. xxvi. 31 ; and this we find nowhere written but in the passage before us. Here, then, God calls upon his own sword to awake against Christ, and to smite him, and this is evidently the expression of righteous indignation. God’s sword is that by which he executes vengeance, as the *jus gladii* among the Romans ; the sword of the civil magistrate, means his authority to execute punishments. Therefore the psalmist says, “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword ; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death : he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors,”

Ps. vii. 11—13. And the apostle urges the fear of the civil magistrate on this consideration, that he “beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil,” Rom. xiii. 4. Hence it is evident, that God’s sword is used in the execution of vengeance, nor is it ever made use of in any other way. The sword which he made use of, when he smote Christ, was more especially the cruel and perfidious Jews, accordingly, we find that David styles wicked men, God’s sword. Thus he prays, “Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down; deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword,” Ps. xvii. 13. And this prayer, we have reason to suppose, David made in the spirit, personating Christ, of whom he was an eminent type; and the prayer itself is the same, for substance, which Christ in his own person made when he cried, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Thus God made use of wicked men as his sword against Christ, to smite him and take away his life. ✓

In like manner, God had before made use of the Assyrians as his rod to correct and chastise the people of Israel. In such language as this doth the prophet foretel the evils which God was about to bring upon his people by the hand of the proud Assyrians: “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to tread them down like the mire of the streets,” Isa. x. 5, 6. When, therefore, God makes use of the same instruments, wicked men, in bringing evil upon Christ, that he had, again and again, made use of in executing his wrath,—when they are expressly called his sword, which is never drawn but for the execution of vengeance,—and

when this sword is expressly called up by God himself, and commissioned to smite Christ, the whole rule and analogy of Divine dispensation, and every concurring circumstance, lead us to view this astonishing event as an awful manifestation of Divine displeasure. All these considerations being taken fully into view, if we cannot read the holy anger of God in the death of Jesus Christ, it will be difficult to determine that this is written in legible characters in any evil that God has ever yet brought upon men.

But, further, we are expressly told that Christ was made a curse. The apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13. These words plainly suppose that the sufferings of Christ on the tree were a fruit and manifestation of Divine anger. For,

1. The curse that Christ suffered, or was made, was none other than the curse of God. The words which the apostle quotes in proof of Christ's being made a curse are these, "For he that is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God," Deut. xxi. 23; and if Christ's being crucified and hanged on a tree are a proof that he was made a curse, they are equally a proof that the curse which he was made was the curse of God, for every one that was hanged on a tree was accursed of God; Christ's being hung upon a tree was a proof that he was made a curse, and therefore a proof that, if he was made any curse, it was the curse of God: if he suffered, or endured any curse, he suffered and endured the curse of God.

2. We know of no other curse of God than what is threatened in his holy law. God inflicts or executes no curses but such as are denounced in his law.

The holy Scriptures certainly know of no other curse, and treat of no other curses that are ever either denounced, or executed, by the Deity, than those which are penalties of the law, and with which the breakers of the law are threatened. Therefore,

3. Christ's suffering the curse of God was his suffering the curse of the law. If Christ endured the curse of God, and the holy Scriptures know of no other curse of God than the curse of the law, it plainly follows that Christ endured or was made the curse of the law; and that it was the curse of the law that Christ was made is manifestly implied in the words under consideration. The apostle says, "that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He was then treating of the curse of the law, and no other; he had just said, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and then asserts, that it is from the curse of the law that Christ hath redeemed us. From this curse Christ redeems his people by being made a curse for them; which evidently implies that it was the curse of the law that Christ was made. There is not here given the least hint of any other curse, nor any thing said to lead the thoughts to any other, or suggest the most distant idea of any other. And as an evidence that Christ, who, it was well known, had been hanged on a tree, was made a curse, the apostle quotes a passage from the Old Testament, in which it is asserted that he who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God, and applies it to Christ. This makes it manifest that the curse of God, which is the curse of the law, was laid upon Christ; and by his being made this curse, he redeemed his people from the curse of the law. The particle *for*, with which the apostle introduces the text from the mosaic law,

plainly shows that the passage is not exegetical, nor brought with design to explain the nature of the curse which Christ was made, but to prove that he was indeed made a curse. Or should it be admitted, (which however there is no reason for admitting,) that the apostle designed in those last words, to let us know what the curse was which Christ endured, still it will be evident that he was made a curse in which God manifested his anger, and, therefore, that the sufferings and death of Christ were indeed expressions of Divine anger. It therefore follows, that the Scriptures plainly teach us that the fruits of Divine displeasure were endured by Christ, especially when he hung upon the tree.

Some have supposed, that to represent Christ as enduring the curse of the law, would necessarily involve in it the idea of his being a sinner, and of his feeling those horrors and that despair which are peculiar to sinners; and this supposition is founded on an apprehension that spiritual death is a great, if not principal part of the curse of the law. But this is a supposition quite without foundation. Spiritual death, as the phrase is commonly used, means a person's being perfectly under the power of sin; or, to express it in Scripture language, "being dead in trespasses and sins," which is the same as his being wholly and totally a sinner. But this surely can with no propriety be considered as a curse upon the sinner. Sin is voluntary; it is what is chosen by the sinner, and is not the curse itself, but that which exposes to it, and incurs it. It would be strange, that for committing one sin, which must be a voluntary act, God should threaten the sinner with committing another, which must be equally voluntary, and make this the penalty of the former—the curse to be endured for it. At

this rate, the penalties of the law could not possibly be any terror to the sinner.

The penalties of the law, therefore, must of necessity, and in the nature of things, be natural evils, not moral. By bringing natural evil it is that God expresses his displeasure against moral. Natural evils are punishments, but moral are not. The former, therefore, and only the former, are the sanctions, or curses of the law. So that Christ's enduring the curse of the law would by no means imply that he was a sinner, that God was angry with Christ, or that Christ felt those sensations of despair, and those horrors of an accusing conscience, which will necessarily accompany, and be a bitter part of the sufferings of sinners, when they endure the curse of the law.

Natural evils, which express the anger of God, are the curse of the law. Natural evils Christ suffered, and those to a high degree. These are all the curse, and the curse of God, and evidently represented as the curse of the law. And when we consider the dignity of the person and the excellency of the character of Christ,—if the natural evils he suffered from the hand of God were sufficient to express to the view of creatures as high a degree of Divine displeasure as the natural evils which God brings on the sinner himself, when he executes the curse upon him,—it can be no reflection upon Christ, nor imply the least defect in his character, to consider him as having endured the curse of the law, and in this sense having been made a curse for his people that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

But it may, perhaps, be here objected, that "As Christ was infinitely far from being himself an object of the Divine anger, the natural evils which were brought upon him were no expressions of Divine



displeasure, either against him, or against any other person. It may be urged that God, in his providence, put the Saviour into that trying situation in which he lived and died, in order to give him opportunity to exhibit the most exalted virtue, and display the excellences and glories of his own character to the best advantage. And if this were the true reason of the sufferings of Christ, the evils which he endured were so far from being any expressions of Divine anger, that they were rather marks of Divine favour, and therefore in all the sufferings that Christ endured, great and terrible as they are, we can behold nothing more than marks of favour and honour to the person of Christ."

In answer to this objection it may be replied, that the idea of the end of Christ's sufferings contained in the objection before us, however natural it may be thought to be in itself, is far from corresponding with the representations given of it by the inspired writers. The Scriptures teach us, that God's sword was awakened and drawn against Christ; that he was made a curse, and that this curse was the curse of God. Here he is represented as being made a sin-offering; being bruised and put to grief by Jehovah, and wounded for our transgressions. And this is language never made use of in the holy Scriptures to express Divine complacency. Swords are not drawn against any one for any other purpose than that of expressing displeasure. Favours are not usually conferred at the point of the sword, and if the evils which were brought on Christ, are to be considered in no other light than that of Divine favours to the person who suffered, we can see no propriety in their being called a curse, the curse of God, &c. If the sufferings of Christ were only marks of Divine favour, and as it

were the post of honour given to the great Captain of salvation, this idea would have been much more easily and naturally conveyed by other and very different expressions from those that are made use of in the sacred writings. It is hard to see how this would authorize us to consider Christ as being made a curse, and being pierced by God's sword, the sword of Divine vengeance. The post of honour is never considered as the curse of him who appoints to it, especially when that appointment is a mark of distinction and favour; and if the curse which Christ was made is not a token of Divine anger, if the sword of God which was awakened and drawn against Christ, and which actually executed him and took his life, did not express Divine anger, a doubt may immediately arise, whether God's curse in any case whatever really expresses anger. If, in that case, it expressed nothing more than kind purposes toward the Saviour, where will be the evidence that in any other case it expresses any thing more than kind, benevolent purposes toward the sufferer? If the curse of God, when laid upon Christ, was no mark of Divine displeasure, no evils nor sufferings whatever, merely from their being the curse of God, will exhibit Divine anger, and of course the curses, the sanctions of the law, do not hold out Divine indignation to view.

The word of God is the authority by which we are to determine both the end and the import of the sufferings of Christ. And when we are here taught that Christ, in dying, was made a curse, that he was made so by Jehovah, that this curse which he was made was the curse of God,—if the curses of God and of his law hold out anger and indignation to view, it cannot consistently be denied that the sufferings and death of Christ were indeed expressions of

Divine anger. Accordingly, the redemption of Christ's people is constantly and abundantly attributed, in the holy Scriptures, to the sufferings, the death, the blood of the Saviour, and by his being made a curse are they redeemed from the curse of the law.

Further, in confirmation of this view of the sufferings of Christ, as being expressive of the anger of God against sin, it is worthy of notice, that the virtue of his atonement is constantly attributed to his sufferings, both by Christ himself, and by his apostles. Thus Christ says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life," John iii. 14, 15. Again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," John xii. 32. When his disciples were confounded at seeing him, whom they believed to be the Messiah, suffer death, immediately after his resurrection he reproves them in the following manner, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things? And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day," Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 44, 46. Accordingly, the efficacy of the atonement made by Christ is constantly represented as being in his blood. Speaking of Christ, the apostle says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7. And the apostle again says that "without shedding of blood

there is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. Therefore it is that "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7; and the robes of the saints are said to be "made white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 14.

Christ's obedience unto death was infinitely pleasing to the Father, and, as has been before observed, of infinite importance. Without this, his sufferings and death could have been no atonement for sin; and for his obedience unto death it is that he is highly exalted, and hath "a name given him which is above every name," Phil. ii. 8, 9. Yet the obedience of Christ, important and glorious as it was, is never once spoken of as making atonement; nor are his disciples ever represented as being purged and saved by his obedience, but invariably by his blood, his sufferings, and death.

Now, if the whole efficacy of the death of Christ, as an atonement for the sins of the world, consisted in the perfection of his personal obedience, we know not how to account for it, that this efficacy of it to cleanse from sin should be constantly represented in figurative language, and that too, when the idea of the perfection of his obedience is not at all heightened by the figure made use of to express it, but would have been, at least, as perfectly clear and intelligible had it been said that his people were redeemed by his obedience unto death. Figurative language is not made use of in the holy Scriptures unless it be where the ideas to be conveyed by it are designed to be less obvious than if expressed in plainer terms, or with a view to give them greater clearness and perspicuity. But, if the sufferings and death of the Saviour were of no other importance as an atonement for sin, than as a testimony of the perfection and height of his obedience, it is hard to be accounted for, that the

Holy Ghost should constantly represent the efficacy of the atonement as being in the death, the blood of Christ ; and much more so that he should speak of Christ as being a sin-offering, and his death as being a curse, the curse of God, and the effect of God's sword drawn against him, and commissioned to smite and execute him, and in this way represent Christ as falling a victim to Divine justice.

These considerations, it is apprehended, sufficiently show, that there was some further end to be answered by the sufferings and death of Christ than a mere exhibition of the strength and perfection of his personal obedience, and that this would by no means warrant that mode of expression which is frequently and abundantly made use of by the inspired writers in treating this important subject. To suppose that the death of Christ answered no other end than to illustrate his obedience, would certainly imply that the figures made use of in representing it are bold and strong, beyond any parallel to be found in the whole word of God, and that the images glow in colours in which it was never designed they should be viewed.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*In which it is shown, that the anger of God, which was expressed in the sufferings of Christ, was really against sinners.*

SOME have apprehended, that it is impossible the sufferings of an innocent person should express anger against the guilty, and on this ground have supposed it absurd to consider Christ as in any sense a

substitute in his sufferings for sinners. Therefore, against the idea of atonement being made by the sufferings of Christ, it is objected, that "we cannot comprehend how the punishment, or sufferings of an innocent person should express displeasure against the guilty."

This objection implies, that it is essential to the character of God that, in his providential government, he should treat every one according to his own character and deserts, and that as far as natural good and evil, brought on moral beings, express the Divine approbation, or the contrary, the glory of God and the rectitude of his government require that he confer only good on the righteous and evil on the vicious. On this hypothesis, therefore, either one or the other of the following things must be true :

1. That it is inconsistent with the character of God, and the rectitude and glory of his government, to exercise mercy to sinners in delivering them from the natural evils their sins deserve. For, according to the objection before us, in the rewards and punishments of the future world, God only expresses his approbation and disapprobation of the several characters of the different persons who are the subjects of them. If it be impossible for God to express displeasure against sinners by bringing natural evil on Christ, it must be equally impossible for God to express approbation of the character of Christ by conferring natural good on sinners. If God can intelligibly express his approbation of the obedience of Christ by conferring blessings on sinners, he can intelligibly express his abhorrence of the disobedience of men by laying the curse on Christ. The objection supposes it absurd that there should be an interchange of persons between Christ and sinners, as to



the blessing and the curse of obedience and the reverse ; and if this be absurd, the salvation of sinners is not to be considered as the reward of Christ's obedience, but of their own penitence and return to their duty ; and consequently, the design of Christ's coming into the world, could be no more than to bring the good news that penitence shall obtain pardon, and of his death, to seal the truth of it with his blood. On this supposition, all the blessings that will ever be conferred on the followers of Christ in the future world are to be considered only as so many marks of the Divine approbation of their characters, and there is no other meritorious cause of the salvation of sinners than their own penitence and return to their duty. This, it is easy to see, at once excludes every idea of gospel mercy, and of the meritorious righteousness of Christ as a ground of the salvation of sinners. If the salvation of sinners be only a reward of their own penitence and obedience, all ideas of gospel grace are wholly excluded ; for it is a maxim of the gospel, that " to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Rom. iv. 4.

2. If it be admitted, that it is essential to the glory of God, and the rectitude of his government, that his anger be in some way expressed in his providence against the wickedness of those whom he pardons and saves, the objection before us must imply, that Divine anger against the sins of men may be manifested to a degree fully sufficient to support the honour of the government of God without any natural evils. The objection supposes that the natural evils brought on Christ did not express Divine anger against the sins of men, and that for this obvious reason, that the punishment or sufferings of an innocent person cannot express displeasure against the guilty. If,

therefore, those natural evils which were brought on the person of Christ were not expressions of Divine anger against the sins of men, they did not in any way express Divine anger, because it is on all hands admitted that they expressed no degree of anger against Christ.

If, then, in the sufferings and death of Christ, God expressed no displeasure against the wickedness of the world, it is manifest that by no natural evils whatever doth he express anger against sinners whom he pardons and saves ; and therefore, whatever be the rebellion and wickedness of men, the honour and rectitude of Divine government by no means infer a necessity of natural evils, but the glory and dignity of the character of God may be fully supported without the execution of punishments.

If in the sufferings and death of Christ God expressed any degree of anger whatever, it must have been against sinners, because no degree of it existed against Christ. But if, on the other hand, the natural evils endured by the Saviour were no expressions of Divine anger, it most clearly follows, that God may, consistently with the rectitude and glory of his government, pardon and save sinners without expressing by natural evils any degree of displeasure against them for their sins ; and if God may do this consistently with the rectitude and glory of his government, he may also consistently with the moral law, which is the great rule of his moral government. For, whatever God may do consistently with the honour of his government, he may also do consistently with the honour of his law, and, of course, the law itself doth not require that the sinner should be punished. So long, therefore, as we believe that neither the glory of the Divine character, the rectitude of his government,

nor the honour of his law, require that sinners should be punished, we cannot possibly, with the least reason, entertain any fears of future punishment, but must, of necessity, view all the awful threatenings of the law only as held out to terrify weak minds.

These are the obvious and necessary consequences of denying the necessity of punishments in the Divine government, when moral evil has actually taken place. To this conclusion will the sentiment, that God may consistently pardon and save sinners without expressing, by any natural evils, his displeasure against them, evidently lead, and in this will it manifestly terminate.

But, if it be granted, on the other hand, that the honour of the Divine government forbids that sinners should be pardoned and saved without God's expressing in some way, by natural evils, his righteous displeasure against them for their sins, it must, of course, be that this displeasure be expressed by natural evils brought on an innocent person, because the salvation in question is from such, and only from such natural evils as the sinner deserves. If this displeasure be expressed by natural evils brought on the sinner himself, the sinner then is not saved. It must of necessity be, therefore, that if it be expressed by natural evils brought on any one, it must be by their being brought on one who is not a sinner, and, therefore, displeasure against the guilty is expressed by sufferings brought on the innocent.

To say that displeasure against the guilty cannot be expressed by evils brought on an innocent person, at once denies either the necessity of punishment, or room for pardon. For if it be essential to the glory of God that he express displeasure against wickedness by any natural evils, these evils must be endured

either by the guilty, or by some one who is innocent. If they are endured by the wicked themselves, the sinner is not, yea cannot be pardoned. If the sinner be pardoned, and the displeasure of God nevertheless be expressed in natural evils, it must of necessity be, that this is done in natural evils brought on one who is innocent. Thus evidently doth the objection under consideration deny any necessity, arising either from the law or the character of God, that sinners should ever be punished, or it denies that sinners of mankind will ever be delivered from that punishment which is their just desert according to the tenor of the Divine law.

But it may, perhaps, be denied that either of these consequences are involved in the sentiment that the anger of God against the wicked cannot be expressed in the sufferings of one who is righteous. It may be urged that "as the obedience of Christ, especially under very heavy and severe trials, expressed a very high degree of love to holiness, this, of course, exhibited a proportionable aversion from sin; and as Christ was God manifest in the flesh, whatever hatred and aversions were expressed by him were the hatred, the aversions of God; and therefore God's hatred of iniquity appeared and was expressed in the obedience of Christ. His acting uniformly against the cause of sin, very naturally and necessarily expressed his displeasure against the sinner."

But in reply to this reasoning, it may be observed :

1. That the objector, in taking this course, splits upon the very rock he means to avoid. It is urged, that the supposition that the displeasure of God against the wicked cannot be seen in the sufferings of an innocent person implies, either, that the wicked will be universally punished, or that the character

and law of God do not require that God's displeasure against the wicked should ever be expressed in any natural evils, any sufferings whatever. The argument before us admits that the Divine Being may so act against sin, and oppose it in such a manner in his own conduct, as to render punishments unnecessary, or at least to render it consistent with the spirit of the law to forgive penitents without expressing, by natural evils, any displeasure against them for their sins. But, if God may forgive some sinners, without testifying his anger against them by natural evils, it is difficult to see why he may not forgive all. If the honour of the Divine law may be so supported without natural evils, as to make it consistent with the character of the Governor of the world to exercise his grace in bringing some to repentance, and then forgiving them, we see not why it may not all. We can see no other objection against the salvation of all than this, that the character and conduct of God could not appear to harmonize with his perfect law, unless he expressed displeasure against the rebellion of men by natural evils. But the argument which pleads that God's displeasure is sufficiently expressed to answer the purposes of law and government in the obedience of Christ, removes this objection; and, therefore, it implies that the honour of God's law and moral government may be supported without the execution of punishments; at least, that there is no necessity of God's testifying against the wickedness of men by natural evils, in order to its being consistent with his character to pardon and save sinners.

2. It may justly be scrupled, whether it can with propriety be said, that the holy and obedient life of Christ expressed any Divine displeasure against men or their sins,—at least any disposition in the Divine

mind to punish men for their sins. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17. Christ's disposition to obey the law was expressed in his life on earth, and whatever reasons there might be, from any considerations, to suppose he entertained a disposition within himself to punish sinners, still his personal obedience to the law did not express it,—in this it was not acted out in its proper and natural fruits. This disposition of the Divine Redeemer remains to be displayed on another day; and if there were no other expression of Divine displeasure against sin necessary than this, we have no reason to expect that any other expression of it will, in fact, be ever made. Accordingly,

3. If God's being manifest in flesh, and acting against the cause of sin in a holy and obedient life, and subduing the power of it in his people, be all the way in which it is necessary his anger against sin should be expressed, we have abundant reason to conclude, that neither the spirit of the law nor the honour of the Divine government require it should ever be expressed in any other way, and, therefore, punishments are far from being necessary under the Divine government. For, on this hypothesis, God would appear to act more decidedly and completely against the cause of sin, and so, of course, express higher displeasure against it, by wholly eradicating it out of the heart of every moral being, and setting all his creatures above the reach of natural evil.

These are but the natural and obvious consequences of the opinion, that the displeasure of God against men for their sins was not expressed in the sufferings and death of Christ.

As an evidence that the sufferings of Christ were



expressions of Divine anger against men for their sins, it is to be observed,

1. That these sufferings were in reality expressions of Divine anger. These were a curse, the curse of God, which can in the nature of things be no other than an expression of anger. The sword of Divine justice was called up, and commissioned against Christ, and smote and took away his life. But it is unnecessary to repeat what has been said on this subject in a former chapter.

2. The anger of God, which appeared and was expressed in the sufferings of Christ, could not be against the person of the Saviour. Christ always did those things that pleased the Father, John viii. 29. He is God's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased, Matt. xii. 18. How often was the voice of God heard from heaven declaring concerning Christ, while he was on earth, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5. Never did the Father view this Son of his love with greater complacency and delight than when he was making his soul an offering for sin, and never did he feel a greater tenderness for him than while he was wounding him for our transgressions, and bruising him for our iniquities.

3. God is invariably displeased at sin, and he never has the least degree of anger against any of his creatures but as sinners. The law of God, which expresses his very mind and will, curses those, and those only, who "continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." When any of God's creatures commit sin, they provoke his anger. But, where there is no sin, it cannot be that God is offended; and as "God is angry with the wicked every day," Ps. vii. 11, every exhibition of Divine anger must be against sinners.

4. It is evident, and is generally confessed, that the happy and blessed fruits of Christ's glorious righteousness are conferred upon sinners of mankind, and enjoyed by them. The apostle says, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 18, 19. And this one person, by whose righteousness the free gift comes upon men to justification of life, the connexion of the apostle's discourse evidently proves to be the Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore," he says again, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," Rom. iii. 20—22. These passages, with many others in the Scriptures, make it evident, that sinners of mankind enjoy the happy fruits of the righteousness of Christ, and that the benefits of his righteousness are of grace, bestowed upon sinners. This is the true and proper import of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers.

Add to these considerations, the frequent and express declarations of the word of God respecting the end of the sufferings of Christ, can there be any remaining doubt whether the displeasure of God, which was exhibited in them, was against sinners? No point can be made more evident by express Divine declarations than this. Here we are told that Christ was "made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5. Here we are taught, that Christ united himself to his people by a strong and invincible love, that he might recover and save them. The nearness of his relation to his people, and the intimacy of the union which subsists between Him and them, are such as to require the strongest similitudes, the boldest metaphors, to express them. He is the Vine, of which they are the branches, John xv. 5; the Husband, of whom the church is the spouse, Isa. liv. 5, 6; the Head, of which his people are the body; even so that they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30.

This is the relation in which we are taught by the unerring oracles of truth that Christ stands to his people. And, standing in this relation to them, it is expressly declared by the Spirit of truth, that he was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities, Isa. liii. 5; that he was made a curse for them, Gal. iii. 13; that he was delivered (that is to death) for our offences, Rom. iv. 25; that he was once offered to bear the sins of many, Heb. ix. 28; and that he bore our sins on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. It is expressly asserted that Christ died for the ungodly—that he died for us, Rom. v. 6, 8; that he suffered for the unjust, that he might bring them to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18; that he was sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7; and, to close the whole, Christ himself tells us that he came to give his life a ransom for many, and was the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, John x. 11, 15.

Beside the very unscriptural consequences which necessarily flow from a denial of the possibility that the anger of God against sinners should appear and be expressed in the sufferings of an innocent person,

these passages of Scripture, together with the observations immediately preceding, are so many concurring proofs, and unequivocal testimonies that, in the sufferings of Christ, this was in fact the case ; and all the mighty power which Christ displayed while on earth, every miracle that he wrought, and still more, if possible, his triumphant resurrection and ascension to glory, together with all the marvellous effects of it which have since appeared upon earth, are so many additional testimonies, so many irrefragable proofs that the righteous displeasure of God, which shone in the sufferings of the Saviour, had really for its object the sins of men.

If the Deity himself had been about to contrive the most effectual means for giving conviction to all creatures, that the anger which burned in the sufferings of his dear Son was not against him, but against sinful men, what could he have done more, what more effectual method could he have taken to ascertain such a truth ? To see the fruits of Divine anger alight upon the immaculate Lamb of God, when he came to deliver his people from the power of sin, and from the wrath and curse of God, and then behold the people of Christ, who are themselves infinitely guilty, reaping the happy fruits of Divine righteousness, so strongly indicates in itself an interchange of persons, between Christ and his people, as to sufferings and rewards, as hardly leaves room for a doubt whether this were really the case. Under these circumstances, the express declarations of the word of God must, surely, be sufficient to put the matter out of dispute, and leave full conviction, in every candid mind, that the sufferings of Christ were, in reality, expressions of Divine displeasure against men for their sins.

But to all this it is objected, that "the rules of righteousness never admit that the innocent should be punished for the guilty. If, as Abraham, the father of the faithful, reasoned, it be far from God to slay the righteous with the wicked, and, that the righteous should be as the wicked, Gen. xviii. 25, much further must it be from God to slay the righteous instead of the wicked."

This objection, it is to be observed, as well as those to which we have before been attending, supposes that if any punishments are necessary in the Divine government, they must be laid only on the guilty,—if it be necessary that God express anger by any natural evils, they must be inflicted on those who deserve them; and, therefore, if it be consistent with the Divine rectitude in any instance to pardon the sinner, it must be because the rectitude of the Divine government does not require that the anger of God against sinners should ever be expressed by natural evils, and, consequently, that the law of God does not require it.

This objection, at least, supposes that the law of God does not require that in every instance he should express displeasure against sinners by inflicting natural evils upon them, and, therefore, that there is not a disposition in the Divine mind that could ever be truly and properly delineated in this way. But if the law and character of God do not require that this should be done in every instance, we cannot see with what propriety it should be done in any; and if this be the case, we may fairly conclude it never would have been done, even if Christ had not come into the world. According to this hypothesis, therefore, we must suppose, that the true end of the coming of Christ was to relieve the minds of men from those unnecessary

fears which the law of God, unless smoothed and softened by some milder and more generous dispensation, would necessarily beget in them. But if this were the true design of the coming of Christ, it is difficult to see how it could with propriety be prophesied of him, that he should "magnify the law and make it honourable," and how this could be a ground of God's being "well pleased for his righteousness' sake," Isa. xlii. 21. Surely the Saviour himself had not this view of the end of his mission when he declared, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," Matt. v. 17, 18.

Further; the objection supposes, that though it be inconsistent with the righteousness of the Governor of the world to treat the righteous as the wicked, yet, the nature of the Divine government is such as doth not require that the wicked should be distinguished from the righteous, but admits that the rewards of righteousness may be equally and indiscriminately bestowed on the wicked and on the righteous. What ideas of government remain, after we have adopted those modes and rules of administration, which equally admit the righteous and the wicked to the rewards of obedience, it must be difficult for any one to ascertain.

It is readily admitted, that it would be inconsistent with the rules of common justice for the Deity, by his mere authority and power, to subject an innocent person to sufferings. But the objector himself admits that the holy and innocent Saviour of the world was indeed subjected to many hardships and sufferings, and we must deny a universal Divine providence, unless we suppose that Christ was subjected to these



sufferings by the power and will of God. Therefore, fact itself opposes the very spirit of the objection, unless it be urged, in vindication of God's righteousness, that *volenti non fit injuria*; and that Christ, willingly and cheerfully, for the purposes of the general good, submitted to these natural evils. But if this maxim be adopted as a solution of the difficulty which real fact presents to us in the Divine government, it will equally afford us a solution of the difficulty contained in the objection before us. For if it be consistent with the character and righteousness of God to bring a small degree of natural evil on an innocent person, upon his freely consenting to it, it is equally consistent to bring greater degrees, if he hath the subject's free consent. If the consent of the subject will justify it in one case, it will also in the other, and if it was a reality that Christ willingly subjected himself to those natural evils which the Father in fact laid upon him, for the purposes of the general good, the supposition that these evils were expressions of Divine anger against sinners will not at all obscure the evidence of the righteousness of God.

If, to promote the general good, the Saviour freely and voluntarily subjected himself to those natural evils which were the proper fruits and testimonies of Divine anger against the sins of men, there was no more injustice done him in their being laid upon him, than if he had subjected himself voluntarily to natural evils on any other account, or for any other reward; and if the consideration of a reward would justify laying evils upon him on any other account, or for any other purpose, it would also justify laying evils upon him as expressions of Divine anger against sinners, in case he could receive a sufficient and full

reward. But if the general good of the universe were better secured, and more highly advanced in this way than in any other, the glory of God in the salvation of sinners will be esteemed by the Saviour a full and ample reward for all his hard labour and sufferings. Accordingly, this is the way in which the holy Scriptures teach us that the Saviour of the world is rewarded for the arduous work which he accomplished by his death. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities," Isa. liii. 11.

Whatever maxims be adopted in vindication of the Divine righteousness in bringing on the innocent Saviour those natural evils which he actually endured, may be improved to equal advantage in vindicating the righteousness of God in expressing his anger against sinners in the pains and sufferings of the Saviour.

There is certainly no natural absurdity, in supposing that Christ should freely consent to bear the iniquities of his people, and that he consenting to it, the Father should lay them upon him. Nor is there in this method of the recovery of sinners the least appearance of unrighteousness in God, or injustice to the Redeemer. And when the holy Scriptures are so very full and express to the case, as has been already shown, no difficulty can remain in supposing that the anger of God, which was expressed in the sufferings of Christ, was, in reality, against sinners.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Showing the consistency of full atonement with free pardon.*

MANY have supposed that the opinion of the sinner's being pardoned upon full atonement made for his sins, is a palpable absurdity; and, therefore, that the doctrine of atonement and the doctrines of free grace are utterly irreconcilable. "For," say they, "when we have received the debt, what grace is there in freeing the debtor? And that, whether the money be paid by the debtor himself, or by some other person?" Were this a similitude which would properly apply in the case before us, it is acknowledged there would be a difficulty. But, this objection arises from a wrong construction of the doctrine of atonement.

In order to show the consistency of atonement with the free grace of God in the salvation of sinners, nothing further will be necessary than to state,

I. The nature of pardon and grace, and show in what cases, and under what circumstances, the sinner may be the subject of them.

II. To show what it is that constitutes the nature, and makes the essence of atonement.

I. We are to state the nature of pardon and grace, and show in what cases, and under what circumstances, the sinner may be the subject of them.

The gospel idea of grace is, in general, that of good conferred where evil is deserved. It is essential to the idea of grace that the subject deserve evil. Accordingly, our first parents, while innocent, were not the subjects of grace in their enjoyment of the favour of God. "To him that worketh is the reward

not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Rom. iv. 4. Therefore,

1. When they enjoy the Divine favour, who really deserve the anger of God, they are then the subjects of grace. When men enjoy blessings and good, in the place of curses and evils which are justly due to them, they are the subjects of grace. Only grace can relieve us from evils and sufferings which we deserve.

2. We are, therefore, of necessity subjects of grace in being delivered from evils which we justly deserve ; and, on the other hand, in having blessings conferred upon us of which we are utterly unworthy. No consideration whatever can take away the grace of these blessings so long as our desert of the contrary evils remains.

3. When no injustice would be done to men in casting them off for ever, it cannot otherwise be than that they should be the subjects of grace in being saved. If men do not deserve eternal destruction, it will necessarily be an injury to them to inflict it on them. But, when men feel themselves to deserve this fate, it will be impossible for them to view it as any other than grace to be delivered from it. It must, therefore, be grace in God to deliver men from those evils which their sins justly deserve. To be saved from a punishment which we have truly merited by our wickedness, must of necessity be a mercy to us. To suppose otherwise would imply, that we justly deserve punishment, and yet that justice requires we should be exempted from it. It is impossible for the sinner's desert of punishment to cease otherwise than by having actually endured it. Therefore, it is impossible that it should be otherwise than mercy to the sinner to save him from the punishment which he justly deserves for his wickedness. In whatever

way this salvation comes to him, whether through an atonement, or not, still to him it is grace; he is the subject of grace.

II. We shall consider what it is that constitutes the essence of atonement; and this, in order to know whether atonement for sins brings obligation on the justice of God to deliver and save the sinner.

Respecting atonement, it is to be observed, that it summarily consists in an exhibition of the righteous displeasure of God against sin, made in some other way than in the punishment of the sinner. The real abhorrence in which God holds the character of the sinner would be no more than truly and fully expressed in his eternal punishment. It is of the utmost importance that this disposition of the Divine mind should appear in the government of God, because this is his glory. Without this infinite purity and hatred of iniquity, he could not be God—be absolutely perfect. If Divine government can be administered in such a way without the punishment of the sinner, as properly to delineate this disposition of the Divine mind to the views of creatures, the Divine character will not suffer by the pardon of the sinner; and in whatever way this disposition of the Divine mind be delineated, whether it be in the punishment of the sinner, or in some other mode not less expressive, the ends of Divine government, in general, are answered. One great end of the coming and death of Christ was to delineate this disposition of the Divine mind, and make a full and sensible exhibition of it. In his sufferings and death this Divine purity and hatred of iniquity were sensibly and gloriously expressed. In the sufferings of Christ God gives us to see that his own infinite mind is full of displeasure against sinners. Christ's sufferings and death

are a glass in which that character of God which we read in the threatenings and curses of the law may become visible and conspicuous. After all that Christ has done and suffered, if God pardon and save the sinner for his sake, it will afford us no reason to believe that there is less aversion in the Divine mind from the character of the sinner, than the threatenings and curses of the law would naturally suggest. In this way, therefore, the honour of the law is preserved, though the sinner be saved.

Viewed in this light, it is easy to see that the atonement infers no obligation on the justice of God to pardon and save the sinner. The objection is not that the purposes of grace cannot be answered if the sinner be not saved, when atonement is made for his sins, but that atonement implies an obligation in justice to save the sinner. But if justice require the salvation of the sinner, the Governor of the world must be guilty of injustice in condemning him. To suppose that it would be unjust in God to condemn the sinner, evidently implies that a just and holy God hath not displeasure enough in him for this purpose ; and, therefore, that such a degree of displeasure could be made visible, neither in the atonement, nor in any other way. But that such a degree of displeasure against sinners hath, in reality, no-existence in the Divine mind, at once destroys all notions of gospel grace in their salvation, and that whether they be saved through an atonement or without it.

If such a degree of displeasure against sinners have a real existence in the Divine mind, no external evidence of its existence can possibly render it unjust for God to destroy the sinner. The higher the evidence of this disposition rises, the more must it appear grace in God to pardon and save the sinner.



Yea, the whole evidence we have of its being grace, must arise from the sensible demonstration of the existence of this pure and holy displeasure in the mind of God. So long as we consider the Divine character as the standard of perfection, we cannot believe a creature to deserve any evil which God has not displeasure enough to bring upon him. But the more sensible we are of the anger of God, so long as we view it to be just and righteous, the more will it appear an act of Divine grace to deliver the object of it from punishment.

The death and sufferings of Christ are a glass, in which we may behold the feelings of the Divine mind toward sinners, and read an abhorrence of their characters, a displeasure against them, which eternal destruction would no more than fully express. Had we no sensible evidence of the existence of this disposition in the mind of God, we could have no evidence that the salvation of sinners is of grace; and had it not been for the coming and work of Christ, we could not have had sensible evidence of this otherwise than in the actual destruction of sinners. Had God saved sinners without any atonement, his government would have furnished no evidence of any such aversion of the Divine mind to the character of sinners; consequently, there could not have been evidence that the salvation of sinners is of grace.

According to this view of the matter, the atonement is so far from being inconsistent with the doctrine of grace in the salvation of sinners, that it exceedingly illustrates it. Atonement is so far from proving that it is not an act of grace to pardon and save sinners, that, above every other consideration whatever, it shows it to be pure grace. Had God saved sinners without doing any thing to vindicate the

honour of his law, and witness his infinite hatred of iniquity, it could not have been evident that this salvation is of grace. The atonement, therefore, is so far from obscuring the lustre of Divine grace, that it greatly adds to it; yea, it is absolutely essential to the evidence of any grace whatever in the salvation of sinners.

*Obj.* "It is a beauty in the character of the civil magistrate to pardon, and this without any atonement, which may nevertheless be termed grace."

*Ans.* Could human laws be framed with such perfection, as that their penalties should express the displeasure of the community only in cases where the public good requires it should exist, pardon could in no case be either consistently exercised by the supreme magistrate or appear to be of grace. Were human laws thus perfect, it would be injurious to the public to pardon in any case whatever, and absurd to lodge a power to exercise it in any branch of the executive authority. Pardon, in this case, would be so far from partaking of the real nature of grace, that it would be evident injustice; for the penalties of the law could never be incurred, excepting in cases where the common good requires that a public odium should be exercised and expressed. Therefore, from the propriety of pardons in civil government, we can infer nothing concerning the propriety and beauty of pardons in the Divine. And, should we admit, as the case now actually is, that it is an act of grace in the civil magistrate to pardon without atonement, it could not, however, be from thence inferred that it would be grace in God, even in any instance, to forgive the sinner without an atonement.

If the displeasure of God exist in every casewherein the penalties of the Divine law threaten it, pardon

without an atonement would be so far from being an act of grace, that it would be an injury to the public, and for this obvious reason, that the Divine displeasure exists in no instances whatever but in those wherein the good of the universe requires it should be exercised. This may certainly be concluded from the perfect and infinite regard the Divine Being has for the greatest good of the universe. But in every case wherein the universal good requires that Divine displeasure should exist and be exercised, it is exceedingly evident that the same principle requires it should also be expressed. Therefore, pardon cannot consistently be bestowed without an atonement, nor could it, without this, be an act of grace.

These observations give us to see the reason why the scheme of the salvation of sinners, through the atonement of Christ, is so much celebrated in the gospel for its consummate and unsearchable wisdom; and why a crucified Christ is represented as the power of God and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. No wisdom, but that which is absolutely and infinitely perfect, could ever have found a way wherein the sinner could be pardoned, and yet the public good be saved; because God is not offended, nor hath the least disposition to punish, excepting in those cases wherein the public good requires that his displeasure be expressed. Could this displeasure be made to appear, and yet the public good be secured, pardon in that case might be consistently bestowed, and would appear to be a glorious act of Divine grace. Nothing but the atonement of Christ effects these ends, and nothing like this bestows such lustre and glory on Divine, sovereign grace.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*Showing in what way it may be accounted for, that the sufferings of Christ should be exceedingly great.*

IN order to see a possibility that the sufferings of Christ might have been very extreme, notwithstanding the absolute perfection of his moral character, we are to observe,

1. That the ground of happiness and misery in creatures doth not lie merely in the mind, independently of all other considerations.

Certain kinds, both of happiness and of misery, are peculiar to certain particular temperaments of mind. But susceptibility of pleasure and pain is common to all creatures, whether good or bad. It is not the virtuous only, who are susceptible of happiness, or the vicious of misery. Had this been the case, the happiness and misery of creatures would be the measure of their moral characters, and exactly proportionate to the degrees of their virtue or vice. Constant experience and observation prove, that as holiness and happiness are not in the nature of things necessarily connected together, neither are sin and misery. All agree that Christ endured some natural evil, and all know that sinners enjoy much natural good. Holy creatures are therefore susceptible of sufferings, and sinful ones of enjoyment. And, were it otherwise, there would be neither occasion nor room for moral government, but virtue would always bring its own reward, and vice its own punishment. Happiness consists not in the exercise of desire, but its gratification; and misery, not in the exercise of sinful affection, but in something which is disagreeable.

God hath established an indissoluble connexion between holiness in this world, and happiness in the next, and between persevering wickedness here, and complete misery hereafter. This is essential to the most perfect moral government. But were these connexions originated by the mere nature of things, the necessity of a day of judgment would be wholly superseded; and every creature would even now enjoy all the rewards which are annexed to the practice of virtue, or feel all the misery which is the desert of sin. It is, therefore, manifest that the natural dependence which is universally found in creatures, whatever be their moral characters, renders them susceptible of good and evil, of pleasure and pain. There is, therefore, no natural inconsistency in supposing that the creature, who is wholly vicious, may enjoy much natural good, or that one, who is wholly virtuous, may suffer extreme misery. Therefore,

2. There is no apparent difficulty in supposing that the Man Jesus Christ might endure a very great and extreme weight of suffering. It was as truly compatible with the power of God to inflict pain upon this Son of his love, as on any other creature, and to cause distress to rise to a very great height in him. It is inconsistent with the nature of things to suppose that Christ should suffer those horrors of an accusing conscience which will make no inconsiderable part of the sufferings of the damned in hell; and inconsistent with the very design of his coming, to imagine that he should endure, even for a moment, that despair, which will make a very bitter part of the pains of God's enemies. There are, however, other considerations from whence distress might arise, and such views of things might crowd in upon his pure and holy mind as could not fail of being extremely painful.

It is to be remembered, that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly a man, possessed of all the innocent passions and feelings of human nature, and all the sufferings, the painful sensations he ever endured, were they greater or less, were in his human nature, and confined to it. It was the human nature of Christ that suffered; a human nature, however, that was exceedingly dignified, and its powers greatly enlarged, by its union to the Divine; a consideration which, instead of diminishing, greatly increased his susceptibility of distress.

Christ being thus possessed of the passions and feelings of human nature, there is no natural absurdity in supposing him, however free from sin, yet capable of very painful sensations. And as all pain is really seated in the mind, it is far from being inconceivable, that the power of God might communicate such views of things to the Man Jesus Christ, as could not fail of being very distressing to him. There is nothing absurd in the supposition, that God might communicate to the mind of Christ a very clear view and lively sense of his just and infinite displeasure against those whom he came to save; and as little absurdity in supposing that this sense of Divine anger should greatly exercise the mind of Christ. And as this is a case very supposable, there is also a visible propriety in it; as we can hardly understand how the mind of Christ should, without it, clearly comprehend the greatness of the work he had undertaken, and how arduous a thing it was to redeem his people from the curse of the law, that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

As the mind of Christ was unquestionably susceptible of a very lively sense of Divine wrath against sinners, it is no less conceivable that this sense of



Divine anger should be extremely distressing to him. If there be any difficulty in supposing that a sense of Divine wrath against sinners should be very distressing to the Man Jesus Christ, it must arise from one or other of these considerations, namely,

1. That this wrath was not against the person of Christ, or,

2. That the large and extended views of things, which his union to the Divine nature would necessarily suppose him to possess, would as certainly prevent pain of mind, as the clear, full light of heaven will prevent it in the saints who are spectators of the vengeance actually executed on the final enemies of God; or,

3. That the beauty of the Divine character, which shone in that displeasure of God against sinners, which was exhibited in view to the mind of Christ, would necessarily occasion the manifestation of it to be pleasing, instead of painful.

1. The first objection is, that the wrath of God, a view of which was communicated to the mind of Christ, was not against him personally, but against sinners. According to this objection, we are to remember it is as hard to conceive that a view of Divine wrath against sinners should give the least degree of pain to the mind of Christ, as that it should fill it with distress. For that object which is capable of ministering any degrees of pain, if it be of sufficient magnitude, may fill the mind with anguish; and if such views of the anger of God against those whom Christ came to save could be communicated to his pure mind, as would affect him with the least uneasiness and concern, the communications might be so enlarged as to raise uneasiness and sorrow to a very great height.

But if a sense and view of Divine anger against men could give no pain to the mind of Christ because he was not the object, it must have been because he was susceptible only of pleasures and pains that were merely personal, which would be to reproach him with that same selfish, contracted spirit, which he came to eradicate from his people. This would suppose that he felt no interest in his church, and that, too, at the very time he was laying down his life for it.

It is very manifest, that the interest we have in a person, or an object, is the thing that gives spring to our concern about it; and however foreign the object may be from our person or ourselves, yet if our affections are interested in it, this lays a foundation for our deriving from it either joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain. If the interest of the community, for instance, engages our attention and affections more than any interest that is merely personal, whatever affects the community will more sensibly exercise our minds than any thing that merely affects our own private interest. A follower of Christ, it may easily be imagined, has such an interest in his kingdom, as more sensibly to feel the injuries that are done to it than any private injury to himself; and if vengeance must be directed against himself personally, or against the interest of his adored Saviour, the latter may appear to him of such superior importance, as necessarily engages him to sacrifice his own interest to that of his glorious Lord. And if this be the effect which the Spirit of Christ produces in the hearts of men, there can surely be no difficulty in conceiving, that the affection which Christ himself had for his church rendered him susceptible of great pain, in view of the just and awful displeasure of God against his people for their sins. It would indeed

be utterly inconceivable that Christ should so love his people, as to lay down his life, and become a curse for them, and yet be wholly unaffected with a sense of the heat of that Divine anger which he saw was against them.

The reason why the mind is affected in a view of objects, is not originally their relation to a private separate interest, but their relation to an interest to which the affections are united, be it either public or private. Therefore, in proportion to the concern which the Man Jesus Christ felt for the salvation of his people, would his mind be affected in a view of that dreadful wrath which there was against them. This is not only conceivable, but is a supposition that is altogether natural. Therefore, that the Divine anger, which was exhibited to the view of Christ, was not against him personally, but against the church, is a consideration which gives us no reason to suppose that it might not affect him with very deep distress. Christ had no degree of selfishness. His and his church's interest were one. Therefore, his good will to the church would occasion the Divine displeasure to be as sensibly felt, as if it had been against himself; at least as far as he perceived it, and had a view of it communicated to him.

2. Another objection against the supposition that the sufferings of Christ could be so extreme as has been represented, is, that the large and extended views of things, which his union to the Divine nature necessarily supposes him to possess, would as certainly prevent pain of mind in him, as the clear, full light of heaven will prevent it in the saints who are spectators of the vengeance actually executed on the final enemies of God.

This objection as strongly denies the possibility of

Christ's suffering the least distress of mind as the greatest; and, therefore, supposes it as unaccountable that he should weep over Jerusalem, or at the tomb of Lazarus, as that he should endure the most extreme agonies of mind in the garden and on the cross. But it is to be remembered, that however real and intimate the union was between the human nature of Christ and the Divine, the former was as wholly dependent on God as any other human nature, and in itself as susceptible of sorrow. Views of things that would be pleasant, or painful, might be communicated or withholden, according to the mere good pleasure of God. Therefore, no possible union of the human nature of Christ to the Divine would render the former invulnerable, or necessarily unsusceptible of distress.

But it is objected, further,

3. That the beauty of the Divine character, which shone in that displeasure of God against sinners, which was exhibited in view to the mind of Christ, would necessarily occasion the manifestation of it to be delightful instead of painful.

This objection rests on the supposition, that it is impossible we should receive pain from any thing which appears beautiful and excellent—that even the contempt of a valuable friend loses its power to wound, as soon as ever we can believe that we deserve it. But constant experience teaches directly the reverse of this. When we are conscious that the displeasure which is exercised against us is undeserved, the character of him who indulges it, must of necessity sink in our esteem, and no sooner is his character disesteemed than his displeasure is disregarded. We pay no regard to the contempt of an enemy, while that of a friend never fails to wound. A consciousness that the displeasure which is exercised against

us is righteous, is the very thing that gives it an edge. A sense of God's being offended, of itself gives no pain to his enemies; but when we become his friends, and feel that his anger is just and glorious, a sense of his displeasure immediately becomes painful. If it were possible that God's displeasure against sin should not be felt when the heart of a sinner is converted, it would be deemed a matter of indifference whether he were the object of Divine favour or anger; and that for this obvious reason, that the same infinitely glorious character of God shines in the latter as in the former.

It is, therefore, manifest, that the glory of the Divine displeasure will not occasion the manifestations of it to be less painful to an ingenuous mind; but more so, because this is the very consideration that gives it an edge, and causes it to wound, when it appears to be against an object in which we feel ourselves greatly interested.

These things being so, it is manifest, that the human nature of Christ was susceptible of sufferings from any, and every quarter from whence they could be derived to innocent men; and that to as much greater a degree as his human nature might be superior to that of others.

It is hence manifest,

(1.) That the Father could withhold from the human nature of Christ those views of himself, and those Divine communications, which were the chief delight and joy of his heart. This may easily be conceived to be possible; and a denial of the possibility of it involves the most manifest absurdity. And should it be so that the Divine Being should withhold from the Man Jesus Christ those manifestations of himself which had before been the support and comfort of his life, it cannot otherwise be than that he should

be filled with sorrow and distress. For the greater were the delight and joy which the Saviour had in such Divine communications, the more pungent would be his sorrow upon their being withholden from him ; nor could the certainty of their future return be in any measure sufficient to prevent the pain occasioned by the present hidings of God's face.

And, as this is evidently possible, Christ's own words while in his agony and on the cross, and the language in which his sorrow and lamentation were before prophetically described, both concur to prove this in fact to have been the case. " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ? How long, O Lord ? wilt thou hide thyself for ever ? shall thy wrath burn like fire ? " *Psa.* xxii. 1, and lxxxix. 46 ; *Matt.* xxvii. 46. This is the language of Christ, and this the description of his distress ; and the terms are but the natural expressions of a heart filled with sorrow, and now languishing under a withdrawment of those Divine communications which had before been its support and life. And when it is plainly a supposable case, that God might so hide himself from the Man Jesus, as to occasion in him great sorrow and grief, and the language in which the suffering Saviour of the world breathes out his sorrows so evidently concurs with such an idea of the matter, and is so expressive of it, we have abundant reason to suppose that this was in reality the case.

(2.) God could so clothe himself with power, and exhibit his awful anger, in the manifestation he made of himself to the Man Jesus Christ, as could not fail of being exceedingly amazing and distressing. Innocent creatures, we have already proved, are not



unsusceptible of such impressions, nor is it incompatible with the power of God to give them. The human nature of Christ, however united to the Divine, was not unsusceptible of such impressions. And Divine power might sustain it under a much greater weight of distress of this kind, than equals the common natural powers of man. And as it is far from being un-supposable, in the nature of things, that this should have been the case, the sorrow and amazement which seized our blessed Lord, as his death approached, and his strong cries to the Father, "if it were possible, that the cup might pass from him," very naturally lead us to suppose that God did put on awful frowns, and display Divine anger in the manifestations which he at that period made of himself to Christ. It would also be no more than natural to suppose, when the circumstances of the case are duly considered, that the views of himself which God exhibited to the mind of Christ correspond with his external treatment of him in his providence.

As all created nature is in itself imperfect, and absolutely dependent on God, it is manifest that, with respect to views of things and Divine communications, God might grant or withhold just as he saw fit. And should the Father withhold from his Son Jesus, in his last hours, those communications which had before been his delight and life, and at the same time communicate to him such a sense of his righteous and awful displeasure against those whom he came to redeem and save, as he was manifestly capable of receiving, it is exceedingly evident, both from Christ's unalterable love to God, and his invincible attachment to the good of his church, that it could not be otherwise than that he should feel inexpressible amazement and distress.

There is not the least need of supposing, that the Divine displeasure should be against the person of Christ, in order to his being deeply pained by such a view of it as might be made to him. And there is no objection, arising from the perfection of Christ's character, or from the union of his human nature with the Divine, against supposing, that here was in fact the source of that pain of mind which he actually endured, that will not be of equal weight against the supposition of a possibility that he should endure any pain of mind whatever. If the perfect holiness of the Man Jesus Christ, and the union of his human nature with the Divine, would render it naturally impossible that he should receive pain of mind from the considerations already suggested as the ground of his greatest sufferings, they would render it impossible that he should perceive pain of mind in the view of any objects whatever that could be presented to him.

As to the propriety of the Saviour's being treated in such a manner as this, when he was himself the great sin-offering for the world, we need only observe that the character of God, as the Supreme Ruler and Judge, was greatly and especially concerned. It was never designed that the personal obedience and death of Christ here upon earth, notwithstanding his participation of the essence of God, should completely exemplify the whole and every part of the character of the Supreme Governor of the world, to whom atonement was to be made. This could not possibly be done, so long as Christ sustained the character of a servant, and acted in a subordinate capacity. But whenever a sacrifice of atonement is offered to God, the character of those for whom the offering is made, and of him to whom the sacrifice is offered, are both concerned, and both to be, in some way, clearly

expressed and brought to view, in order that the controversy may be clearly understood, and a reconciliation, honourable to the offended, and safe to the offender, may take place in consequence of the offering. It became the Saviour, therefore, when he was about to offer up himself as a sacrifice of atonement for sin, as much as was possible to put himself in the place of the sinner. And it equally became the Sovereign of the universe to express, in a lively manner, his feelings toward the sinner, and his righteous anger against him, in his treatment of the sacrifice. This idea of things is implied in the very institution of sacrifices for sin, and naturally springs even from the appointment of a substitute for sinners.

Thus it appears that there is no greater difficulty in accounting for the sufferings of Christ, on the present hypothesis, than on any other supposed ground whatever, nor any absurdity in supposing them to have been inexpressibly great. And what has been before observed respecting God's great end in the creation and government of the world, the original ground and necessity of an atonement, and the actual substitution of Christ in the place of the sinner, all concur to strengthen and confirm these observations, and prove that the principal weight of Christ's sufferings arose from the deep impressions which were made upon his mind of the awful anger of God against sinners.

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## CHAPTER X.

*Showing in what sense atonement is made for the sins of the whole world.*

IT has been the common belief of christians that the death of Christ is, in its own nature, a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole human race. And the general offers and invitations of the gospel seem evidently to countenance such an opinion; for if the atonement be not sufficient for the sins of all, it will be difficult to see how the offers of mercy may consistently be made to all. And if mercy, through an atonement, may be consistently offered to all, it will be asked, Why may it not also be consistently exercised toward all, and so all be finally saved?

Whether the doctrine of universal salvation be a natural and certain consequence of Christ's satisfaction, will depend upon the ideas that are entertained of the sufficiency of the atonement which is actually made for the sins of men.

It is therefore to be observed,

I. That if by the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, be meant such a display of Divine righteousness as supersedes all use of punishment in the Divine government, the atonement made by Christ is not sufficient for the recovery of all. It is plain, that all the valuable ends of punishment were not answered by the sufferings of Christ. For both reason and revelation assure us, that the evils brought on mankind in the present state are the fruits of Divine anger; and if universal peace and happiness in the future world may certainly be inferred from the sufferings of Christ, it will be difficult to give a reason why so many evils

take place in the present state. If Divine anger has been so abundantly displayed in the atonement, as to render all future punishment unnecessary, it is hard to conceive the reason why so many evils are inflicted on the human race in the present world. The sufferings of mankind are an unanswerable proof that, however perfect the atonement be in the Divine view, all the valuable ends of punishment are not actually answered by it. For if it would be inconsistent with full atonement for God to bring evils on men in the future world, it would be equally inconsistent for him to bring evils on them in the present. If, on account of the atonement, justice demands an exemption from all punishment in the next world, it equally demands it in this. It is therefore evident, whatever displays of Divine righteousness and anger were made in the sufferings of Christ, that all the purposes of Divine benevolence cannot be answered without a display of the same glorious attributes in a variety of evils brought upon men. And if it may subserve the purposes of Divine benevolence to bring evils on men in this world, we can by no means be certain that it will not subserve the same glorious purposes to inflict evils on them in the next. If temporary evils may answer valuable ends in the government of God, we cannot be certain that eternal ones may not also. If evils are necessary to the fullest display of the Divine glory, we have no sufficient authority from the atonement to deny that they always will be necessary. If atonement doth not prevent their present necessity and use, we have no evidence that it will their future.

“But,” says the objector, “the evils which are brought on mankind, in the present state, are only designed to form and raise the subject to higher degrees of felicity in the next world; and, therefore,

are so far from manifesting Divine anger, that they are but the natural expressions of God's kindness to the sufferer. Consequently, all the displays of punitive justice that ever are to be made, were, in fact, made in the sufferings of Christ."

Besides the express declarations of the word of God, which abundantly prove that the evils brought upon the world are fruits of Divine anger, it is to be observed, that this objection goes on a ground which denies the necessity of an atonement, or of any exercise of punitive justice; and, therefore, cannot consistently infer universal salvation from the atonement. The objection supposes that the evils which God brings on the human race are no evidence of Divine anger, consequently universal salvation cannot be inferred from a display of Divine anger in the sufferings of Christ. The objection supposes, that the evils brought on men are only designed to beget in them a higher relish of happiness, and, therefore, that instead of testifying anger, they express nothing but kindness, and will certainly issue in higher degrees of felicity.

To the objection, considered in this light, it may be replied,

1. That it is far from being evident that merely a sense of misery, on the whole, increases happiness. In order to take away the force of the argument for future punishment, which would naturally arise from the evils of the present state, it must be supposed that pain and misery heighten pleasures, and are necessary to increase the relish of the good which it is supposed is laid up for men in the next world; and, therefore, that there is no evidence, from the evils of the present state, that God is angry, or that he has not the highest good of every subject really at heart. Thus



it is said, it is well known that losses sweeten enjoyments,—pain, pleasure, and sickness, health. But that this argument may have weight, it must be supposed, that men may consistently choose to lose some of their present comforts in order to sweeten the enjoyment of those that remain ; choose pain to heighten pleasure, and sickness in order to enjoy health. But would any man, in his senses, make such a choice ? Would any man be glad of pain and sickness, that he might know the pleasure of health ; choose to have his house consumed by fire, that he might enjoy the escape of his wife and children, or lose one child, that he might take greater comfort in the rest ? Common sense, and the very feelings of mankind, revolt from the supposition, and yet all this must be supposed, before the sentiment that present evils are no testimonies of Divine anger can be admissible. For if natural evils, brought upon us in this world, are no testimonies of Divine anger, there is no evidence that the favour and friendship of God will secure us against them in the next. If they are a necessary means of increasing felicity in the present state, where is the evidence that they will not be so in the future ? And to what a height God may in his kindness raise them in the next world, it will be impossible for us with any kind of certainty to determine. The objection before us rests on the supposition that our pleasures will be but feeble, and our enjoyments soon languish, unless enlivened by a sense of pain. And if so, there can be no evidence that we shall ever arrive at a happier state of existence than the present, or be in a situation where the intermixture of good and evil will, on the whole, be more favourable to felicity. But if, on the other hand, notwithstanding the atonement, Divine anger be

manifested in bringing evils on men in this world, it can with no certainty be inferred from this doctrine that the wisdom of God will not see it to be necessary to bring evils on mankind in the world to come.

2. But if the objection goes on the supposition, that the evils of the present state give clearer views of the riches and glory of Divine grace, and in that way prepare the subject for higher enjoyment, this will imply that these evils are testimonies of Divine anger. And if a view of Divine anger be necessary to the clearest understanding, and the highest sense of the nature and excellency of Divine grace, how can we be certain that it is not necessary to the highest felicity of the human race, that some manifestations of Divine anger should be made to eternity? and therefore, that the happiness of the race on the whole may not be increased by means of the destruction of some part of it? At least so much is evident, that there is no ground on which the objection before us can have weight that will imply the least absurdity in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Nor is there any thing in the atonement more difficult to be reconciled to future manifestations of Divine anger, than to those which are made in the present world.

II. If by the sufficiency of Christ's atonement be meant such a manifestation of Divine displeasure against the wickedness of men, as is enough to convince every candid spectator that the disposition of the Divine mind is perfectly conformable to the true spirit of God's written law, it may be truly said that there is sufficient atonement made for the sins of the whole world. It was apparently the design of God that we should infer from the sufferings of Christ the awful effects of Divine anger, should it fall with its full weight upon us. Therefore, the

Saviour, alluding to his own sufferings, says, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke xxiii. 31. We cannot rationally suppose, that Christ would have reasoned in this manner, unless his own sufferings had been a specimen of Divine anger, from which very amazing effects, should it fall immediately upon us, might be inferred.

When we consider the infinite dignity of the character of Christ, the sufferings which he endured give us as lively apprehensions of the righteous and inexorable anger of God against sinners, as all the awful threatenings of the law can possibly do. And every one who receives the testimony of Christ, and truly believes the design of his death, thereby sets to his seal that God is true; not only that the law itself is right, but that the government of God is perfectly conformable to the true spirit of it.

Here there is a foundation laid, sufficiently broad, for the general invitations of the gospel; and for that joyful proclamation, that "whosoever will may come and take of the waters of life freely." No glass had ever yet been held up before men in which the Divine wrath might be so clearly seen; nor any thing ever exhibited in the Divine government, which would raise the ideas of creatures to such a height, or enable them to form so just an estimate of it.

Here the direct end of atonement is answered, and such a manifestation made of Divine righteousness, as prepared the way for a consistent exercise of mercy. Now, God would not appear to give up his law, even though he pardoned the sinner, or to exhibit a disposition different from that which he expressed in the law. But, merely from the exhibition which was made of Divine wrath in the sufferings of Christ, the

pardon, even of one sinner, could, with no certainty be inferred,—unless it might be inferred from the highest evidences of the reality of God's displeasure against us, that, therefore, he would certainly not punish, but pardon us. Upon atonement being made, the great Governor of the world may consistently bestow, or withhold mercy, just as shall tend most effectually to answer the general purposes of Divine goodness; whereas, had there been no atonement, there would have been the highest inconsistency in the bestowment of pardon, even on one sinner. Now, the Divine benevolence might express itself in having mercy on whom it would have mercy, and in hardening whom it would, just as it would contribute to the greatest felicity of the created system; while, without an atonement, benevolence itself could never have urged, or even admitted, the pardon of one sinner.

The atonement, therefore, expresses a benevolence which has for its object the highest good of the creation,—that very character of God which is expressed in the free and general invitations of the gospel. From the atonement, therefore, the universal salvation of sinners cannot, with the least appearance of reason, be inferred, unless it be first made further evident, that the ends of the truest and most perfect benevolence cannot otherwise be completely answered; which, it is presumed, cannot be done. This doctrine, consequently, never originated the opinion that sinners of mankind would be universally saved, but it must have arisen from some other quarter.

It being thus manifest, that the doctrine of atonement is far from being sufficient to support the doctrine of universal salvation, we proceed to mention some things which give reason to suppose that the very ends of the atonement may be more perfectly

answered without the universal salvation of sinners, than by it, and that the eternal destruction of some part of the human race will bestow a lustre on this doctrine, which it would want without it.

It may first be observed, in general, that whatever illustrates the dignity and glory of the character of Christ, does, of course, give import and significance to the atonement. The higher the dignity and excellence of Christ's character rise in the view of creatures, the more important will his sufferings and death naturally appear. The greater import, also, there appears to be in the sufferings of the Saviour, the deeper will the impressions be on the minds of creatures of the awful anger of God against sinners. By how much the higher ideas of Divine anger against sin rise in the creature, by so much the more clear and lively will be the sense and view of the freedom and richness of sovereign grace, which will proportionably contribute to the greater felicity of the subjects of it. So that it appears to be of great importance, even to the very ends of the atonement itself, that the dignity of Christ's character should be set in the clearest point of view.

Hence it is, that all the human race are given into the hand of Christ for him to dispose of for ever, as appears from his being appointed the Judge of the world. And that the atonement may receive additional import from the eternal destruction of sinners, and the glory of Christ's character be greatly illustrated by the vengeance which he takes upon his enemies, is evident from the following considerations :

1. The dignity and glory of a conqueror appear as illustrious in the destruction of his enemies, as in the deliverance of his friends; and regard to the public good is as manifest in the evils which are inflicted

on the opposers of it, as in the protection which is offered to its friends. Therefore, the Father is represented as saying to Christ, in consequence of his having finished the work of redemption, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," *Psa. ii. 8, 9.* In this way is Christ to triumph over his enemies. This is to be a part of his reward for his sufferings; and a promise of such a triumph would never have been made to him, unless it would contribute to his greater glory, and render his merit more conspicuous. And if the true merit and glory of Christ's character may be illustrated in this way, this would naturally lead us to expect that his tender love to his church, and his infinite aversion to the enemies of his cause and kingdom, will be exhibited in awful vengeance on impenitent sinners at the day of judgment.

2. Christ's executing vengeance at the day of judgment, will naturally express a higher degree of respect to the moral law than could have appeared without it. The real merit of Christ, in his character of Mediator, consists in his regard to the moral law, or to that character of Jehovah which is expressed in it. Had not his obedience and death, while upon earth, flowed from this principle, it would have been of no worth in the sight of God. But because he "loved righteousness, and hated wickedness, therefore God, his God, hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows," *Psa. xlv. 7.* Had he not expressed the highest sense of the excellency of the Divine law, his obedience and death would not have been the least ground for mercy to sinners.



But while he was upon earth, neither in his life, nor in his death, had Christ advantage to express, in full perfection, his infinite love to the law of God. For this he needed to sustain a different character from that which he appeared in while on earth, and to be in a different station. While in the world he held the station of a servant, and appeared and acted in no other capacity. Then he expressed the most perfect respect and love for the Divine law which his situation and character permitted. His whole life was a scene of the most perfect and spotless obedience, and that in the midst of the greatest opposition and trials. And further to discover his entire approbation of the Divine law, and the high estimation in which he held that glorious character of Jehovah which appears in it, the Saviour himself submitted to death, and voluntarily became a curse. But the part which he had to act for God, and for his glory and honour as the great Lawgiver and Judge, was not yet come to an end. Therefore was it of importance that he should be set at the head of the universe, be appointed Judge of quick and dead, and pass the solemn decisive sentence, which would fix the fate of creatures to eternity. In this high and exalted station, the regard of the Divine Mediator to the moral law, his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, are expressed in ways in which he had no opportunity to discover them while he was upon earth, and glow in colours in which they never could before appear. Then, he manifested love enough to the law of God, as a servant to obey it even unto death; now, as a King and Judge, to administer government according to the strict tenour of it, dispensing rewards and punishments, and actually inflicting the death which the law threatens. As a

servant, he loved it to a degree which engaged him to endure the curse; as a King, to inflict it. Before, it appeared that he loved sinners well enough to die for them; now, that he loves God well enough eternally to condemn them.

From his station, therefore, as King and Judge, the Mediator is viewed in a different light from what he could appear in before, and clearer discoveries are made of his real and transcendently excellent character. Now his love to the Divine law puts on a different form from any in which it had before been seen. And this act of awful justice, in dooming impenitent sinners to eternal death, gives a significancy to the sufferings of Christ, which creatures never could have apprehended without it; giving a solemn majesty to his death, which will enable his people for ever more highly to prize it.

Here we see an obvious reason why the Mediator should be appointed the Judge of the world. This exalted station, the holy Scriptures teach us, was given him in reward for his sufferings, for his obedience unto death; and in this last solemn act, before he gives up the kingdom into the hand of the Father, he is able to exhibit in more strong and glorious colours than could ever before appear, the perfect union and harmony in himself and in his arduous work of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace. These not only have harmonized and united in all the doctrines which he taught, and the work which he accomplished on earth; but they meet and kiss each other in the solemn sentence of his lips, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

3. The greater respect is manifested to the law of God by such a person as Christ, who died for sinners, the more evident will be both the evil of sin and the necessity and import of the atonement.

All the new honours reflected upon the Divine law by the Mediator necessarily enlarge our ideas of the evil of sin ; and, by how much the more the evil and malignity of sin are made manifest, by so much the more necessary will the atonement appear, and the significancy and importance of it be proportionably increased in the estimation of creatures. And yet, without this last and solemn act of judgment, it is exceedingly manifest that the high estimation in which the Divine law is held by the Divine Redeemer could never be so clearly discovered, or so sensibly apprehended by creatures, even though he died to magnify and make it honourable. The saints, therefore, would for ever be destitute of that discovery of righteousness in the Mediator, which, above everything else, crowns the regard to the law of God, which he expressed in dying upon the cross.

But, when the regard of Christ to the Divine law is seen from the seat of judgment, and expressed in a sentence of everlasting punishment upon impenitent sinners, the saints will see, in a clearer light than they ever could before, how great a thing it was for Christ to die for sinners, and become a curse, that they might be the righteousness of God in him. By these means, therefore, the Divine purity and hatred of iniquity will be rendered more evident, and, consequently, clearer apprehensions be had of the nature, the extent, and the glory of Divine sovereign mercies. All which, it is easy to see, contribute to a vast enlargement of the powers and happiness of those who are saved by Christ.

But, on the other hand, should it be that the sentence of the law is in no instance executed at the last day, it is exceedingly manifest that one glorious testimony of Christ's respect to the Divine law will be wanting ; and, therefore, one evidence of the necessity and importance of his death. And, in proportion as the evidence of all these is defective, the ideas of Divine grace must be diminished, and the glory of the whole gospel fade away.

These observations make it manifest, that the atonement, notwithstanding its entire sufficiency and fullness, is far from implying either a necessity or certainty of the salvation of the whole human race ; so far from it that, on the other hand, both the necessity and import of the atonement may be greatly illustrated by the eternal destruction of impenitent sinners. And if the preceding observations are just, the true nature of atonement could never be seen, nor properly understood, nor the real worth of it be suitably estimated, were the penalty of the law in no instance executed in its full extent upon transgressors.

And as the sense we have of Divine grace must necessarily be in proportion to the ideas we entertain of God's hatred of iniquity, it seems no more than rational to suppose that, in order to preserve and heighten a sense of grace in those who are saved from among men, there will be perpetual display of Divine anger on vessels of wrath. And to see this vengeance executed by Him, who himself became a curse for his people, will greatly exalt his character, and give a language, a significancy, to his death, which was never before so clearly understood.

## CONCLUSION.

IT may be of advantage, before we dismiss the subject, to turn our attention for a little while to some of the natural consequences of a denial of the doctrine of atonement, or of the supposition that the mere persevering obedience of Christ was all that was necessary to open a way for mercy to sinners. These two opinions will probably be found, on careful inquiry, to amount to one and the same thing ; at least, not to be materially different in their consequences. They both deny any real necessity, arising either from the moral character of God, or from any other consideration of his executing any punishments, or, when sin had taken place, of displaying in its natural fruits that displeasure which the penalties of the law would naturally suggest.

On these sentiments it may be observed,

1. That if it be unnecessary to the glory of the Divine character, and the good of God's moral government, that he should express his displeasure against sin, when it had actually taken place, by inflicting natural evil, it was of course unnecessary that God should ever threaten the sinner with natural evil. Where the general good doth not require punishments to be inflicted, it doth not require that they should be threatened. So also in cases where benevolence will not express displeasure, it will not threaten creatures with it. It discovers capriciousness and want of wisdom to annex penalties to laws which never need be executed—to express displeasure in words in cases wherein it doth not in fact exist. On supposition, therefore, that God's displeasure against sinners never need be expressed in natural evils, it is evident

that the moral law, abounding as it does with awful threatenings, doth not express the true and real character of God, but one infinitely the reverse, exhibiting in words anger which hath no existence in the Divine mind, and arraying the great Governor of the world in vengeance, while anger is not in him. Nothing, therefore, can more directly subvert the first principles of Divine revelation, than the supposition that it is unnecessary to the glory of the Divine character that God should express in natural evil his displeasure against sin. That opinion which supposes that sin might have been forgiven without atonement, clothes the Divine Being in a character exceedingly different from that in which he appears in the moral law, and represents him as being possessed of a goodness of an exceedingly different nature from that which the moral law exhibits. Therefore, for Christ to come, and magnify this law and do it honour, when it exhibits a character in God so infinitely different from that which would certainly have saved sinners, even though Christ had never appeared on earth, would be very far from pleasing to the Father, and never in his view could have merited that high station to which he is now exalted.

These consequences necessarily flow from a denial of the necessity of an atonement, if it be granted that the moral law, as promulgated in the sacred Scriptures, speak the mind and will of God. If the Divine will, the feelings of the Divine mind, perfectly correspond with the written law, it is inconceivable that God's anger against sinners should not be expressed in his moral government by natural evil. And when we consider the supremacy and mighty power of God, to deny the need of natural evil in order truly to express the character of God when sin hath actually



taken place, is the same as to deny that there are any feelings in the Divine mind which, in their natural consequences and expressions, would bring evil on sinners. For if such feelings exist in the Divine mind, they cannot be known otherwise than by being expressed in God's works. And if it is God's great end to make himself known, and in works exhibit his true character to the views of his creatures, there is no more reason to suppose that the Divine government will be destitute of the fruits of this part of the character of God, than of those which directly express his approbation of virtue.

The supposition, therefore, that atonement is not necessary to the exercise of mercy toward sinners, evidently implies that the written law doth not, in fact, speak the very mind and will of God ; but that the law itself, at furthest, intimates no more than that the sinner who persists in wickedness shall fall under the Divine anger. But that persevering wickedness and impenitency, and these only, shall subject us to the anger of God, is so far from being the language of the Divine law that it curseth every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. If, therefore, nothing but persevering wickedness so incurs the Divine anger as to expose to natural evil, nothing can be more certain than that the written law does not indeed truly express the will of God. This must be true, unless the plain and natural language of the law is that only certain atrocious sins shall be punished. And if the consequences of a denial of the necessity of atonement, which have already been mentioned, be admitted to stand until this can be found to be the language of God's written law, they will not suddenly be subverted.

He that can put such a construction on the moral

law as leaves room for the escape of sinners of certain denominations and characters, with an equal degree of dexterity in criticism and construction will soon discover that sinners of every denomination may, even by law, be exempted from punishment, and, therefore, enjoy for a little while the poor consolation of believing that anger is not in God, and that there are no punishments for the wicked.

2. If it be unnecessary to the glory of the Divine government, that God's anger against sinners should be expressed in bringing natural evil, it is equally unnecessary that any such displeasure as would, in its natural fruits and operation, bring evil on sinners, should ever have existence in the Divine mind. The supposition that Divine anger need not be exercised and expressed, implies that it is of no use, and, therefore, not an excellency in God, and consequently can have no existence in him.

Thus the opinion, that there is no necessity for God's expressing his anger against sinners, by bringing natural evils upon them, not only cuts off the penalties of the law, but exhibits the Divine character itself in a point of light exceedingly different from that which the moral law naturally expresses. And the denial of any necessity of atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of pardon and mercy, plainly amounts to a denial of the necessity of punishments under the Divine government, or of any necessity, arising from the Divine perfection, that God should ever express displeasure by inflicting natural evil.

Nearly the same consequences are involved in the opinion, that the persevering obedience of Christ was all that was necessary in order to open a way for mercy to sinners. For unless this persevering obedience expressed Divine anger against sinners, it is

manifest that there is no necessity that God should either exercise or express anger, and, therefore, all the consequences which flow from a denial of the necessity of atonement, flow equally from this construction of the nature of it.

But to say that Christ's obedience expressed Divine anger against sinners, is the same as to say that all that anger which exists in the Divine mind against them may be expressed without natural evil, without punishments. This is evident, because it is implied in the supposition before us, that Christ expressed the character of God,—that the disposition of the Divine mind was perfectly delineated in Christ, and in his obedience. And if the whole disposition of the Divine mind toward sinners may be expressed without natural evil, without punishment, it is plain that no punishment is ever to be expected or feared; and that for this obvious reason, that there is, in fact, no disposition in the Divine mind actually to punish offenders, or to bring natural evil upon them.

Further, to say that God expresseth displeasure against sinners by rewarding the obedience of Christ with a pardon to sinners, is still saying that there is no anger in God, but what may be properly and fully expressed by bestowing rewards. It would be absurd to suppose, that the rewards which a master or a parent bestows upon an obedient servant or child, express displeasure against the rest of the family. And if such be all the anger that ever exists in the head of the family, neither children nor servants need ever be afraid of punishment. So, if all the displeasure which exists in the Divine mind against sinners may be expressed in rewarding the obedience of Christ, it is apparent that there is no displeasure which need ever be expressed in inflicting punishment.

Should it be urged, that both the Father and the Son expressed displeasure against sinners, by unitedly acting against the cause of sin, and that this is all the way in which it is necessary the Divine anger should appear, the consequence would still be that there is no disposition in the Divine mind to punish offenders. Because this implies that God may express all the displeasure which he really hath against sinners by acting in such a manner in his providence for the cause of righteousness, and against that of iniquity, as would render all punishment unnecessary.

The denial of any necessity of atonement, and every construction of the nature of it which renders punishments unnecessary, are equally subversive of the moral law. Every explanation of the nature of atonement which implies it to be unnecessary that God should express anger against sinners by natural evils, invests the Divine Being with a character very different from that which the moral law naturally expresses. All such ideas, either of the necessity or nature of atonement, suppose that there is nothing in the moral law which would naturally and necessarily forbid an expectation of pardon upon repentance, even though Christ had never come into the world ; and therefore, that the penalties of the law do not in words express any such displeasure against sinners as, in its natural operation and fruits, would bring the punishments spoken of in the law upon them. Such ideas of atonement imply, that whatever disapprobation may exist in the Divine mind of the characters of sinners, still it is of such a nature that it may be all expressed without natural evil ; or, at least, that we could not have inferred, from the clearest view we could have had of it, that God would ever punish sinners, even had Christ never come into the world and died.

The whole controversy respecting atonement, therefore, turns upon the explanation of the moral law, and probably arises from different constructions put upon it. If the written law is expressive of an anger in God against sinners, which, in its natural operation, would bring eternal punishment upon them, it is obvious that the spirit of the law cannot be preserved in government unless this anger be in some sensible way exhibited to the views of creatures; and consequently, that it would be inconsistent with the character of God to pardon sinners without an atonement, and such a one as should exhibit this anger, and in which it should appear to burn against sinners.

But, on the other hand, if God may consistently pardon sinners without an atonement, or without exhibiting an anger which would bring eternal destruction upon sinners, should it fall immediately upon them, it is obvious, either that the law exhibits no such character in the great Governor of the world as would lead us to expect such an event, or that the true character of God is not fairly delineated in the moral law. For that the law should threaten eternal death to every transgressor, and at the same time fairly and faithfully delineate the moral character of God, and yet that God should pardon the sinner without any atonement, is a manifest absurdity. The supposition, therefore, that God may consistently pardon without any atonement, either wholly subverts the Divine law, or gives a view of it totally different from that which is naturally exhibited in an atonement.

Here, then, according to the ideas of those who deny the atonement, are the true feelings of genuine, gracious repentance, at least it involves an apprehension that it would be inconsistent with the very nature, and with every idea of goodness for God to shut us

out from his favour. From any repentance toward God, which involves those ideas of the Divine character, it is easy to see the human heart is not naturally very averse. Yea, to define any material change, with respect to its views of the Divine character which takes place in the human heart in repentance, will on this hypothesis be utterly impracticable. Surely, no such change can be conceived as renders Divine supernatural influences in any measure necessary. We need not, therefore, be surprised to hear those who deny the necessity of atonement, renounce every idea of Divine supernatural operation in the conversion of sinners.

And with what appearance of consistency men, who entertain such ideas respecting atonement, can urge that this is a doctrine which subverts the very notion of grace in the pardon of sinners, is hard to be conceived. For with such it is a fundamental maxim, that it would be inconsistent with goodness to deny pardon to penitents. On this foundation the superstructure of their whole system is built; and what grace there can be in conferring pardon, in cases wherein it would be unjust and cruel to withhold it, cannot possibly be imagined. Little reason have those who entertain such sentiments to exclaim against the advocates of atonement, as denying the doctrines of free grace in the salvation of sinners.

Thus manifest is it, that the denial of atonement makes a total change in the aspect, not only of the moral law, but also of the whole christian system. It exhibits both the Divine character itself, the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, and the terms on which the sinner may be pardoned and saved, in a light infinitely different from that in which they all appear in the atonement of Christ.



And now it must be left with the candid, intelligent reader to judge for himself, faithfully comparing what is here offered with the unerring oracles of God. These are the only standard of truth, and by these must every doctrine be tried. Every sentiment, every scheme of doctrine, that will not bear this test, however cherished, or by whatever great name it be authorized, will sooner or later fall to the ground. While, on the other hand, every system and every sentiment that is found here, however unpopular, however exploded by the great and the wise among men, will infallibly stand, and shine and brighten for ever and ever.

And the whole must be left with Him, who himself made atonement for the sins of the world, for him to use and to dispose of, as in infinite wisdom he shall see will be for the best. With him the cause of truth may be confided; in his hand it is infinitely safe. May the time be hastened when the darkness shall be dispelled, and the light shall shine, when his truth, such as it is, shall be known and be confessed from one end of the earth even unto the other, and the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Amen.

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## APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A VIEW OF CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM A DENIAL OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

THE doctrines of christianity are so connected together, and many of them so evidently imply each other, that a denial of one subverts the foundation of others. This is more obviously the case respecting that of the Divinity of Christ, than almost any other doctrine. As the christian system is built on Christ, his character is so interwoven with the whole, that the nature and consistency of it can be comprehended no further than his true character is understood. All evangelical doctrines derive their complexion from the character of Christ, their Author, and must necessarily admit and require very different constructions, according to the sentiments which are to be entertained respecting the real Divinity of his person.

We often derive advantage from a view of consequences naturally flowing from opinions proposed to us. Consequences afford one rule for trying the justness of the principles from which they result. The consequences which naturally flow from opinions, and the influence these opinions necessarily have on others, serve many times to show their consistency, or the reverse. In this view of the subject, it may be useful to trace some of the consequences which flow from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

In the preceding Examination of the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, the true and real Divinity of Jesus Christ was taken for granted, and on this ground

was the inquiry into the nature of the atonement he made for sin conducted. As the truth of this doctrine is much more freely and openly called in question than it was when the Treatise was first published, it is thought that, in aid of this important subject, a view of some of the consequences, naturally resulting from a denial of the real and essential Divinity of Christ, may now with propriety be added.

I. If Christ be not truly a Divine person—God as well as man—it must be that there is no atonement made for the sins of men ; and, of course, if any sinners of mankind are pardoned and saved, they are saved without regard to any atonement made for them.

If the death of Christ were not an atonement for sin, none has been made. By atonement is here meant that which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honour which would have been done by the execution of its penalty whenever it be incurred. The only natural and ordinary way to magnify and honour a broken law is to execute its penalty on the offender. Laws, which are not executed, will neither be of force, nor command respect. If the sinner be forgiven without such a testimony of Divine displeasure against him as honours the law of God, and establishes its authority to the same degree that the execution of its penalty would have done, it would seem to diminish the respectability both of the law and of the Lawgiver, and naturally tends to take away the fear of offending God. Whenever, and in whatever way, the displeasure of God against the sinner be as fully and sensibly expressed to the view of creatures, as it would have been by the execution of the penalty of the law upon him, atonement is made for his sins, and the ends of punishment are answered. By atonement, therefore, we mean a clear

and visible manifestation of that righteous anger, which really exists in the Divine mind against the sinner, without the offender's being subjected to personal punishment.

If Jesus Christ be but a creature—if he be not truly and really a Divine person—no atonement in this sense of the term is made for sin : for aught we can see it might have been forgiven with as little injury to the character and respectability of the law of God if he had never come into the world. If Christ be but a mere man, or a mere creature, in whatever sense it may be supposed he died for sinners, there is nothing in his death to exhibit the character of the great Governor of the world in the light in which the threatenings of his holy law represent it. No temporary sufferings of a mere creature could exhibit a displeasure in him who inflicted them, to be compared with that which would necessarily appear in the execution of the threatened penalty on a sinner. For the sinner, therefore, to have been forgiven, would seem necessarily to cast reproach on the law of God, and beget an opinion that so high a degree of displeasure as its penalties import never did, in fact, exist in the Divine mind.

If, on the other hand, Christ is really a Divine person—in such a sense the Son of God, that he partakes of the very nature and essence of the Godhead,—if a person of such dignity gave his life a ransom for sinners, bearing their sins in his own body on the tree, the character of that glorious Judge and Avenger, who laid on him the iniquities of us all, must appear in a light exceedingly different from what it would or could have done, had the sinner been forgiven out of any supposable respect to Christ, if he were but a mere creature. Yea, the very sufferings

of Christ must, in this case, have exhibited the character of God in an unspeakably different light from what the sufferings of any mere creature could have done. That nothing short of the deep humiliation and sacrifice of a Son so infinitely near and dear to him, would prevail on the Eternal Father to remit in any instance the penalty of the law, must manifest in God the highest conceivable respect to his holy law ; it shows that a law, guarded by such penalties, could in no other way receive sufficient honour, if sinners were forgiven. If the Saviour, who was sacrificed for his people, is in this full and high sense the Son of God, the sacrifice shows as high a respect to the moral law as would have appeared in the execution of the penalty on him, for whom the sacrifice was made. For creatures to see that without such a sacrifice God will not permit the transgressor to go unpunished, will naturally excite in them as great a fear of offending, as it can be supposed the threatenings of the law are capable of exciting.

In estimating the displeasure, which is ever manifested in sufferings, we naturally take into view the character of the sufferer, as well as the quantity of sufferings themselves. We read greater displeasure in the pains and sufferings inflicted on a person of high and exalted character, than in the same degree of natural evil laid on one of much lower character and worth. And if it be just, that we should in this way estimate the displeasure of the holy God in evils which he inflicts, it must be admitted, on the principle that Christ is truly a Divine person, that in his humiliation, sufferings, and death there is as full and visible a discovery of Divine anger as is made in all the awful threatenings and penalties of the law of God. Consequently, if Jesus were truly God as well

as man, there is an atonement made for sin in the sense in which it is urged to be necessary for the pardon of a sinner. If, on the other hand, he be but a mere creature, there is no atonement, agreeable to the definition of the term before given, made for the sins of men.

Here, then, it may not be improper to note several consequences which will result from the pardon of sin without any atonement.

1. If Christ have not made an atonement for sin by his sufferings and death, it cannot be on account of any righteousness of his that penitent sinners are pardoned and saved. Many things in the sacred Scriptures have induced a general belief in christians, that the righteousness of Christ is the great and only consideration on which pardon and eternal life are ever bestowed on a sinner. Christians are said to be justified by the blood of Christ, and to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 9, 10. The righteousness of the law is said to be fulfilled in them, Rom. viii. 4. And God is said to impute righteousness without works to believers, Rom. iv. 5, 6. Christ is said to be made righteousness, as well as sanctification and redemption to his people, 1 Cor. i. 30. And the apostle says, God made Christ to be sin for believers, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Christ is, also, said to be the Lord his people's righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. And their language is, In the Lord have we righteousness, Isa. xlv. 24. Accordingly, Paul wished to be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, but that "which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9.

The term righteousness relates to a rule or law by



which the moral actions and characters of creatures are to be tried and decided. It plainly supposes such a rule to exist. The moral law, as revealed in the holy Scriptures, is the only rule by which the actions of men are to be tried, and by which their characters are to be decided either as righteous, or the reverse. So also, the terms justify and justification relate to law, and imply a rule, agreeably to which persons are or may be acquitted from any guilt charged upon them. The foregoing passages must therefore imply, that sinners who are pardoned and saved by Christ are not acquitted from condemnation without that righteousness which the moral law requires, and which, in the eye of law, would be sufficient to justify and acquit them from every charge which could reasonably be brought against them.

It is true, that, in the nature of things, it is supposable an acquittal should be granted a criminal, without any regard to law, or any righteousness of the law; though it might be difficult for us to discern the consistency of it with the character of a righteous judge. But should the holy God in this way acquit one who is a sinner from condemnation, it could not easily be perceived how, with propriety, it could be said, that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in him: nor can we see any way in which this righteousness is or can be fulfilled in a sinner, unless there be in the character and work of Christ a proper and reasonable ground for God to treat sinners who believe in him as righteous persons, and for bestowing on them the benefits of righteousness. There is no way in which we can conceive the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled, in a moral creature, otherwise than by his either perfectly obeying it, or suffering its penalty—or by the righteousness and sufferings of another,

to whom he stands in such a relation that his vicarious sufferings and righteousness answer the same valuable ends of government as would have been answered, either by his own perfect obedience, or, in the absence of that, his suffering the penalty of transgression. But, unless Christ is a person of such high and infinite dignity, that his subjecting himself to the law, and bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, does the same honour to the Divine law, and as entirely establishes the authority, and honours the government of God, as would have been done by the execution of the penalty on the transgressor, it will not easily be seen how his people are said to be justified and redeemed by his blood; nor, unless believers in Christ derive from him the benefits of righteousness, and that in a way as truly honourable to the just God and his righteous government, as though they themselves had fulfilled it, do we see how righteousness can be said to be reckoned or imputed to them—how Christ is made righteousness to them—or how he is their righteousness. To suppose the terms justify, justification, righteousness, as they are used in the holy Scriptures, in reference to believers, have no relation to law—the rule by which the actions and characters of men are estimated,—must imply that they are used in a sense very foreign from their original import, and in a manner which conveys no instruction to us.

If it be not on account of that righteousness of Christ, which consisted in his perfect obedience and his becoming a curse, that believers are pardoned and justified, no respect is had to the law or to its righteousness, that we can see, in the provision which is made for the salvation of sinners. If there be no atonement for sin, (as there is not, if Christ be not

a Divine person,) no regard is had to law, or to any righteousness of the law in the bestowment of pardons on offenders. If this be the way in which pardons are conferred, no righteousness either is or need be imputed to the subjects; Christ is not their righteousness, nor is he, nor need he be, made righteousness to them. If it be that pardons are thus absolutely bestowed on any of our guilty race, there might have been all the same grounds, for aught we can see, for the salvation of sinners, as those on which it is actually bestowed, had Christ never come into the world and died,—the law, as a rule by which, and according to the spirit of which, moral creatures are to be either acquitted or condemned, is, as to them, perfectly set aside.

But it may be said, that sinners are pardoned and saved on their repentance and return to obedience, and, therefore, though the doctrine of the Divinity and atonement of Christ be given up, it cannot be said with propriety, that no regard is had to the honour and righteousness of the law, in their pardon and salvation, for that sufficient honour is done, and respect paid to it, when the offender acknowledges its righteousness, condemns himself for transgressing, and returns to obedience. In reply to this, it is to be observed, that, if any regard be had in this case to any righteousness whatever, it must be to the sinner's own—the righteousness of his repentance and return to obedience. That this should be considered, either as the righteousness of the law, or doing honour to it, must imply that the law condemns sinners only on condition of their persisting and dying in impenitence. On no other construction of the law of God than this, can the sinner's repentance and return to obedience be considered, either as doing any sufficient

honour to the law, or fulfilling its righteousness. That sinners of mankind are saved, and restored to the favour of God, on account of any personal righteousness ever found in them, naturally leads to this construction of that holy law of God, which curseth every one who does not continue in all things written in the book of it to do them. If, on the other hand, the holy law of God makes perfect holiness the only condition of our inheriting his favour, it must be undeniable that no righteousness of a sinner can be the ground of his being saved from the execution of that curse, which he has incurred : for the righteousness of a sinner, be it ever so perfect in its kind, can be the righteousness of no law, but such a one as is satisfied and sufficiently honoured by his repentance, and consequently of none but what makes persevering, final impenitence the only ground of condemnation to punishment.

But if the import of that moral law, under which God has placed us, be no other than that those who persist in disobedience, and die in impenitence, shall suffer its curse, it is a clear case that the repenting, returning sinner has neither incurred nor deserves it. He does not come within that description which alone subjects to the curse. There can be no occasion, therefore, for any atonement to be made for him, or for any other righteousness than his own, to open a way for him to the favour of God. We observe,

II. If sinners are pardoned and saved any otherwise than through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, there will be no evidence that their salvation is by grace.

That the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace is a doctrine most clearly and fully taught in the gospel. It is so expressly asserted on a great variety of

occasions in the New Testament, as to render it unnecessary to recite any particular passage. Though all who profess to believe the gospel will acknowledge that the salvation of sinners must be by grace, many, however, entertain very different ideas of the nature and import of that grace by which sinners are saved. It will be necessary, therefore, to ascertain, if we can, the scriptural idea of the term, when it is used to express the greatness of Divine goodness and mercy, which are exercised in the salvation of sinners.

Here then, it is to be observed, that the term grace, when it is used in the holy Scriptures to express that Divine love which is exercised in pardoning and saving sinners, does not mean the bestowment of favour and blessings exceeding any proper merit in the object, or the worth of any service performed, but it means favour to the ill-deserving,—blessings conferred on such as merit nothing but punishment at the hand of God. It is essential to the scriptural ideas of grace, that the object of favour deserves punishment. Only such as deserve the wrath and curse of God can be the objects of God's saving mercy and grace.

In proof of this, it is to be observed, that the apostle, treating on the doctrine of our justification by faith, tells us, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 4, 5. And again further, verse 16, still treating on the same subject, he observes, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." When there is no defect of obedience, the reward is there said to be of debt. Thus it is to the holy angels, who never sinned. And thus it would have been to

our first parents, had they never transgressed. A reward, bestowed agreeably to a covenant or promise for services and obedience, however far it may exceed the worth and value of the service, is yet, in the language and estimation of Scripture, of debt. But a reward by grace invariably means favour showed to the ungodly—blessings bestowed on those who deserve nothing but evil at the hand of God. So also, if the virtue and obedience of a sinner be the consideration on which he is received into the favour of God and treated as righteous, his justification is evidently not of grace, but the reverse. For the apostle, speaking of the way in which Abraham was justified, says that “if it were by works, he hath whereof to glory.” In the like distinguishing manner he speaks of the salvation of sinners; “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of works, lest any man should boast,” Eph. ii. 8, 9. Abraham would have had whereof to boast, had he been received to favour and justified on account of any obedience of his own.

These observations are sufficient to determine the sense of the word grace, when it is used to express the goodness of God in the salvation of sinners, on the one hand, and the nature of the consideration on which this salvation is conferred, on the other.

That the wisdom of grace in the salvation of sinners will be, at least, greatly obscured, if the atonement and righteousness of Christ are not the great and only consideration on account of which such mercy is bestowed, appears thus :

1. The evidence of grace in the salvation of any one, must be in proportion to the evidence there is of his ill desert. Grace can be seen no further than the ill desert of its object is seen. Should any of the



human race be saved, without public evidence at the same time exhibited of their desert of the displeasure of God, it could not be evident that their salvation is by grace ; nor, of course, could they be “to the praise of the glory of Divine grace.” Admitting it may be known to God that they are saved by grace, still, there being no public evidence or manifestation of it, a great and important end, which God evidently has in view in the salvation of sinners, would be unattained, and the heavenly host could not ascribe that glory and praise to God, which are justly due to him for his wonderful mercy and grace. If grace be the bestowment of good where only evil is deserved, and this be necessarily implied in scriptural ideas of grace, it must be obvious that grace can no further appear than the guilt of the object appears. It must also follow, that the degree of grace in the salvation of the sinner must be estimated by the degree of ill desert which appears in him. If there be but little visible proof of his desert of evil, the grace, by which he is saved, must appear proportionably small. Where there is no visible evidence of guilt in the object of Divine favour, there can be no evidence that any good he receives is of grace.

2. The estimate which God forms of the character of any one, it must be admitted, affords the best and only sure rule by which we are to estimate it. God is the Judge ; He judges righteous judgment ; estimates characters and actions truly and righteously ; there can be no error in him. That this is the best and only sure rule by which we can estimate moral characters and actions will probably be admitted.

3. It must also be admitted, that God’s ultimate treatment of his creatures affords us the best rule we can have for judging of the estimate he forms of their

moral characters. When God in no way manifests any displeasure to any one, we can have no right to conclude that his moral character merits displeasure. When God bestows blessings on any one, giving no visible testimony, at the same time, that he holds his moral character in abhorrence, we have the same reason to acquit him of guilt, as we have to conclude that the Judge of all the earth does right, and is a holy and just God. Where we can discover no marks of Divine displeasure against any one, we can have no right to conclude that he merits any; and, therefore, can have no ground for considering any good bestowed on him as being of grace. If any one be finally and eternally saved, without evidence of his ill desert in God's sight, we can have no just reason to conclude that his salvation is by grace.

Hence it must follow, that the visible evidence of grace, in the salvation of sinners, must be in proportion to the manifestations which are made of God's anger to them, and of his abhorrence of them. If this be so, it must follow, that nothing ever took place which so clearly and fully evinces the sinner's salvation to be by grace, as the atonement Christ has made for sin by his own blood. If Christ was truly a Divine person, and the sufferings he endured, when he bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, were expressions of the anger of the just God against sinners, the evidence that their salvation is by grace must be clear and incontrovertible.

On the other hand, if Christ be but a mere creature, no sufferings he endured were expressions of the anger of God with sinners, on which hypothesis no atonement is made for sin, and there will, of course, be no evidence that the salvation of sinners is by grace. This is but the natural and genuine consequence of

denying that atonement was made for sin by the death and sufferings of Christ ; and, that no atonement is, in fact, made, will be on all hands admitted, if he be not a Divine person, truly God as well as man.

It must further appear, that, if the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, and of the atonement made by him, be denied, no regard that we can see is had to God's holy law, or the righteousness of the law, in the pardon and justification of believers. We can discover no way in which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, or how that holy law, which they have been under, which they have awfully violated, and the curse and condemnation of which they have incurred, is magnified and made honourable. On this principle, the law of God, for aught we can see, is perfectly set aside in every instance wherein a sinner is pardoned and saved.

It may be said, " Though the doctrine of the atonement be given up, it cannot properly be said, that the law of God is set aside by his bestowing pardon on penitents ; because the repentance of the sinner being made necessary to his pardon, and the condition of it, evidently proves a respect had to the law, and to the righteousness of it, in his salvation." In reply to this, it may be observed, that, as has been before suggested, this will suppose that the holy law of God has no other demand on the sinner than that he repent—that his repentance and return to obedience are a fulfilling of the righteousness of the law. And if this in truth be the case, nothing can be more obvious than that his being received to favour and saved, is not, and cannot be by grace. For every one will see, that where the righteousness of the law is so fulfilled by any one, that he is not condemned by it, no grace

can be exercised toward him in his being preserved from the execution of any penalty of it. But whether the sinner's repentance and return to obedience be all the righteousness which the law of God in strictness require, or not, it is manifest that if no other righteousness of the law be fulfilled in the penitent than what is implied in his return to obedience, the law of God, which requires perfect obedience, and that on pain of death, is exceedingly abated, and very greatly mitigated in his case. And if his repentance and return to obedience are the consideration on which he is restored to the Divine favour, it is very obvious, that his salvation is not by grace. On whatever ground it be supposed that a sinner is restored to the favour of God, if it be in a way wherein God's holy and righteous displeasure with him is in no way rendered as visible as it would have been in the execution of the penalty of the law upon him, it is very evident that it cannot appear he is saved by grace.

But to the justness of this conclusion, it may be objected, that "though God spare and save the sinner without any regard had to any honour done to his broken law, either by an atonement made for sin, or by the penitence of the sinner, it must, nevertheless, fully appear from his holy word that the subject of this salvation has incurred the curse, and consequently that he is saved by grace."

To this it may be replied, that if the government God administers do not accord in the true spirit of it with the construction we may have put on his word, we shall feel ourselves compelled to interpret his mind by the former, rather than by what we may have apprehended to be the import of the latter. God's actual administration of government over his creatures is the best comment on the law he has given them, for

“he is of one mind, and none can turn him.” It must, however, be most dishonourable to God to suppose the least disagreement between the administration of his government, and the true spirit and import of his written law. Still it is difficult to see how the supposition can be avoided, if it be admitted that God, in any instance, receive to favour a creature whom his word condemns, without any regard had to any honour done his broken law, as the ground of it. If God do this, we certainly can see no evidence of such displeasure in the Divine mind against sin in every instance, as we had apprehended the threatenings and curses of his word import; and how, in such a case, we can avoid supposing that we have improperly interpreted his word is not seen. If, indeed, such displeasure does exist in the Divine mind, it must be incontrovertible, that, as far as the visible proofs of it fail, so far there is a defect of evidence that any favours bestowed are of grace. We see not how the Deity himself can feel that he exercises grace in the bestowment even of the highest favours on one whom he does not view as deserving of endless perdition; nor, unless he exhibit in his government such a view of the object of his favour, can we suppose that he requires his creatures to consider any blessings, however great, to be fruits of unmerited mercy and grace.

It is objected again, (if indeed it be admitted by the rejecters of the doctrine of Christ’s Divinity and atonement that any of mankind will be finally sentenced to endless punishment,) that “the punishment of some will be a public evidence that all deserve it, and, therefore, that the Divine mind holds the personal characters of the saved in no better light, than it does those of the damned; that the punishment of the damned will, therefore, be a public and standing

evidence and proof of the estimate which infinite righteousness forms of men universally,—consequently that evidence cannot be wanted that such as are saved, are saved by grace.”

In reply it may be asked, Where is the evidence that infinite righteousness estimates the characters and deserts of the saved in no other light than it does those of the damned? It cannot by the supposition arise from any atonement, either made or required, for their sins any more than for the sins of the damned. Nor can we collect this evidence from any thing said in the word of God; because the actual treatment, which the saved receive at the hand of God, stands in the way of any inference we can make against their characters from any other consideration whatever.

If it be, that God pardon and save sinners absolutely, without any regard had either to their repentance, or any atonement made by Christ as a reason or consideration on which they are received to favour, it cannot be seen that he makes his word the rule of his government,—that the character which we should apprehend, from the threatenings of his word, was essential to him ever appears in his administration. On the hypothesis before us it must be manifest, that, from the word of God, we cannot be authorized to conclude, either that all mankind, or a part will be finally saved, or eternally perish.

But you will still object, “Even on your own hypothesis of the real Divinity of Christ the Saviour, and of an atonement made by him for sin, if any of mankind are saved, (as all grant there will be,) the word must cease to be a rule of the Divine government, or to afford evidence of the estimate, which God forms of the characters of men. For, even on



your own plan, there is as real a disagreement between the word of God, and the government he actually administers, as on ours."

In reply, we observe,

1. That, admitting the Divinity and atonement of Christ, and the application of the benefits of his righteousness to believers, it will not appear that the word of God ceases to be the rule by which he estimates, and by which we are to estimate, the characters of men universally. Christ came into the world to save sinners; for the sins of men he was made a propitiation. If the sacrifice he made of himself is accepted, and those who believe on him receive its benefits, this can be no evidence that God estimates their characters differently from what they are estimated in his written word. The salvation of men by Christ can be no evidence that their characters are, originally, in any measure different from those of such as perish, or that they are less deserving of endless punishment. Nor can it be any evidence that God is less offended with them, or that he holds their characters in less abhorrence than he does the characters of those whom he sends to destruction—for, notwithstanding their being believers, it is the ungodly whom God justifies. From these considerations it must be manifest, that the salvation of sinners, through the blood and atonement of a Divine Saviour, gives not the least reason to apprehend that God estimates their characters and deserts in any measure differently from the estimate given of them in his written word; but, instead of that, affords abundant proof that he does not; otherwise such a propitiation must have been unnecessary for them. The word, consequently, will still remain a perfect interpreter of the Divine mind, exhibiting the character of God in no other

light than he himself exhibits it in his government. The salvation of sinners through the merit and righteousness of Christ, it must therefore appear, does no injury to the authority or the honour of the written word of God. Nor,

2. Will it appear, on sinners being pardoned and saved through the merit and righteousness of Christ, that the word of God ceases to be the rule of his government. The word estimates the ill desert of the transgressor, and shows in what abhorrence his character is held by the righteous Governor of the world. When this abhorrence of the Divine mind is made as fully visible in its natural fruits, as though the curse had been literally executed on the offender, (and it is made evidently to appear to be the Divine abhorrence of the character of the pardoned sinner in whatever way this be done,) the authority of the law is maintained, and the spirit and import of it supported in government. Every thing in this case is done which is necessary to give commanding influence to the written law, and preserve it from reproach; and every thing necessary to honour and vindicate that high and holy character of the righteous Governor of the world, which his word represents him to possess.

All will agree, that the mere misery of creatures, whatever their characters may be, can do no honour to the Divine character, or answer any valuable end in government. Unless punishments tend to deter from crimes, unless they exhibit a character in the righteous Governor of the world, which excites a fear of offending on one hand, and a confidence in his protection and defence of the innocent on the other, it must appear that they are useless, either as a manifestation of the glory of God, or a security of the peace and welfare of his kingdom. It is the visibility

of the just displeasure of the holy God against offenders that renders punishments useful, and promotes the honour and security of the Divine government. This righteous displeasure is expressed in words in the threatenings of the law of God, and in its effects in the destruction which will be inflicted on final impenitents. If this displeasure against the deserving object, in every instance of transgression, be expressed and become visible, the law is honoured, its end answered, and its authority supported: for not the sufferings of the sinner do this, but the character, the just anger of God appearing in them. In whatever way this holy displeasure of God against the sinner becomes visible, the ends of government, for aught we can see, are answered, and the Divine administration is so far from disagreeing with the word, that it most evidently corresponds with it.

It is admitted, that the law which sentences sinners universally and indiscriminately to a punishment, which will be a proper and adequate expression of the abhorrence in which sin and sinners are universally held by the Divine Lawgiver, is not and cannot be literally fulfilled if any are saved, even though it be through the atonement of Christ. But it is insisted, that in the pardon and salvation of believers through this atonement, no disrespect is shown to the law of God, either as being a just estimate of the demerit of sin, or of the Divine abhorrence of it; nor does it in the least favour the opinion that the Divine law is not the rule agreeably to which his government will be for ever administered. In all the respects in which the Divine law is useful and important as a rule of government, it is honoured and magnified even in the salvation of sinners through the atonement.

Nor can it be reasonably objected, that the

atonement, viewed in the light in which it has been represented, in any degree obscures the lustre of grace in the salvation of sinners; instead of this it serves, on the contrary, greatly to illustrate the glory of sovereign grace. For the clearer and fuller evidence we have of the Divine abhorrence of the characters of men, the more evident it must be that if any of them are pardoned and saved, it must be by an act of grace. But what event ever did or can take place to exhibit the Divine abhorrence of sin and the sinner in the light in which it must appear in his laying on his own Son the iniquities of us all, and wounding him for our transgressions. To see the Lord of glory bearing his people's sins in his own body on the tree—this being the only way in which a door of mercy could be opened to sinners—exhibits such a view of God's righteous indignation, as nothing else, which we can conceive, could possibly have done. When He, who was God manifest in flesh, interposed between Divine justice and guilty men, to avert from us its awful blow, though it had seemed for a long time as it were to have lain asleep, the voice is immediately heard from the throne, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Beholding this sight who could but reason, as the blessed Saviour himself did when going to the cross, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry!" Could it be that by his arduous and glorious work, the great God and Saviour brought himself into debt to his rebel subjects! On what possible grounds can we found any claims! Because Jesus has so loved us as to wash away our sins in his own blood, shall we, therefore, claim pardon and salvation as our due?

Instead of that, how evident is it that nothing could ever so clearly and fully demonstrate, that the salvation of sinners must be only by grace, as the atonement made by Christ ; or manifest such unspeakable glory in that grace by which sinners of mankind are saved ?

If, on the other hand, the sinner be received to favour without any clear and sensible manifestation of that displeasure against him which really exists in the holy mind of God, how evident is it that the fear of offending, naturally excited by threatenings and penalties, must necessarily be diminished, the law lose its authority, and the Lawgiver incur disrespect ! For aught we can see, this must be the case, respecting both the law and the great Lawgiver, if sinners be forgiven, in any instance whatever, without an atonement.

Again, if sinners be forgiven without any atonement, it must be on the ground that neither the glory of God, nor the good of his moral kingdom, require any manifestation of Divine displeasure against them. Here it will be kept in mind, that by atonement is meant a manifestation of that just and righteous anger of God, which the sinner deserves, in some other way than in his punishment. Considering the subject in this light, it must be obvious that, if the sinner be received to favour without an atonement, no exhibition is, in fact, made of that righteous anger of which he is the object. And if God receive sinners in this way to favour, it must appear that neither his own character and glory, nor the good of his kingdom, render it necessary there should be any manifestation of his anger against the sins of men. And this is the same as to say, that neither the glory of God, nor the good of his kingdom, require that he ever appear to be angry with the sinner.

This point may perhaps need further illustration, before we proceed to any inferences from it.

If God is indeed angry with the sinner, as the holy Scriptures most expressly and abundantly assert, this anger can appear and be expressed only in his inflicting punishment. We conceive of no way in which the righteous Governor of the world can manifest his hatred of moral evil, but by inflicting natural. Natural evils we, accordingly, find to be the only penalties of his holy law. Where no natural evil is inflicted, there will be no evidence that the Lawgiver is offended. From the bestowment of good, we infer the well-pleasedness of the wise Dispenser of rewards and punishments. In this way the Divine oracles clearly authorize us to judge; the word of God being filled with promises of blessings and good to the righteous, and threatenings of curses and evil to the wicked. We conceive of no way in which God's anger with sinners can become visible, or in which his government as a Ruler can correspond with his holy law, unless natural evil be inflicted on the offender, or on some other person to whom the offender stands in such a relation, that he himself appears to be the object of displeasure.

If this be so, it must be manifest that, if the sinner be forgiven and received to favour without any atonement being made for his sins, it must be on the ground that neither the glory of God, nor the good of his moral kingdom, require any expression of God's anger with him; for we may be assured that the great and holy God will never do anything which shall be inconsistent with his own glory, and the best and highest good of his moral kingdom.

From such an hypothesis as this, the following consequences naturally result :



1. That threatenings are unnecessary and useless. Where evil need not be executed, it never need be threatened. We see no valuable end answered by threatenings which never need be executed. When executions are unnecessary, threatenings are equally so ; yea more,—inasmuch as threatenings which never are designed to be executed, and never need be, necessarily sink the character of the ruler, and bring his authority into contempt. It cannot but be seen that if the glory of God do not require him to execute, neither does it to threaten. All objections, therefore, against the necessity of atonement in order to the pardon and salvation of sinners, lie with equal weight against every threatening we find in the book of God.

2. If it be so, that the character and glory of God require neither executions nor threatenings, it must appear that the sanctions of his holy law are unnecessary—or rather, that the holy law of God is, in fact, without sanctions. Of what use then is a law in the government of God? What can be the benefit of a law (if indeed there can be a law) without penal sanctions? It can suggest no motive to obedience from the consideration of any good as its reward, nor restrain from disobedience by the fear of evil. That indeed can with no propriety be termed a law which has no sanctions—which does not enforce duty by the consideration of the good and evil consequences which shall follow obedience, and the reverse.

3. If it be unnecessary that God manifest anger against sin and the sinner, it must be unnecessary that any such affection exist in the Divine mind, and on this hypothesis we can surely have no evidence that it does. It must be clear, that if neither the glory of God, nor the good of his kingdom, require a manifestation of Divine displeasure where moral evil is

committed, neither do they require the existence of any such displeasure. It cannot be seen how it will be for the glory of God to entertain an anger which it will not be for his glory to express. It must be obvious, that the good of God's moral kingdom requires the existence of nothing in his mind and character, which it will not be for the good of this kingdom to exhibit in his government. If anything of this nature exist in the Divine mind, (of which, however, we can have no evidence,) it neither is, nor can be beneficial to the system; therefore not a perfection, not a beauty in the character of God. And if there be any instance of moral evil against which it is unnecessary that Divine displeasure be witnessed, we can see no reason why it is not unnecessary in every case, and in this short way arrive at the conclusion that no such affection as anger with any of his creatures has any place in the Divine mind.

If, therefore, sin be forgiven and passed over in any instance without an atonement, we see not why it should be thought injurious to the Divine character that all sin be passed over without punishment. The salvation of even one sinner, without visible testimonies of the abhorrence in which the character is held by the righteous Judge, evidently sets aside the necessity of such testimony in any case whatever. And we may safely confide in it, that that God, who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, will never inflict unnecessary punishment.

On the principle, therefore, that sin may be forgiven without an atonement, we can see no reason to believe there ever will be any future punishments; the necessity of them being evidently set aside by the supposition that pardons may in this absolute manner be in any instance bestowed. To this conclusion,

the reasonings of those who deny the Divinity of Christ naturally lead, in this their principles terminate; and to this conclusion, as the result of their reasonings, they probably mean to come. The doctrine of the Divinity of the Saviour, and of the salvation of sinners through an atonement made by his blood, is too nearly related, and stands too closely connected with that of eternal punishments, to be admitted by such as wish to get rid of the latter. For this reason it probably is, that it is so strenuously urged by many that the Lord Jesus is but a mere creature.

4. It must follow, from the preceding observations, that if any sinner be finally saved without an atonement made for his sins, his character is not held in such Divine abhorrence as cannot be adequately expressed in any finite punishment. And if God bestow on any of the human race all the blessings and good, which any can imagine will be the reward of the most uncorrupt virtue and innocence, nothing will remain on the principle before us from which his abhorrence of their characters can be inferred. When the treatment any one receives, without at the same time any manifestation of God's displeasure with him, is the same as that of the righteous, whence shall it be inferred that his character is viewed in a less favourable light? And, as has been before observed, there can be no ground to conclude that he experiences mercy, and is saved by grace.

5. It must appear still further, on the principle that men are saved without any atonement, that there is, in fact, no evidence that God is offended with them—at least to a degree that endangers their future and eternal peace. Where there is no exhibition of Divine displeasure, there can be no evidence that

any displeasure exists. Whoever of mankind entertains a hope of being made finally and everlastingly happy, no witness being given by natural evils that the great God holds his character in infinite abhorrence, must do it on the ground that God has no such abhorrence of him : he can have no other. And should any one be on this ground spared and saved, it cannot be that he should have any apprehension that his salvation is by grace.

With good reason, therefore, may it be concluded, that such as expect finally to meet the favour of God, and yet deny both the Divinity of Christ, and the necessity of atonement, found their hopes, not on the mercy of God, not on anything the holy Scriptures term grace, but on an apprehension that they neither do nor can deserve eternal evil at the hand of God. And for the same reason that one may expect to be saved on this ground, another may, and so may all mankind. And if this be the true ground on which any one of the human race will be saved from eternal destruction, it may safely be concluded that no monuments will be ever made of God's eternal displeasure.

Should such sentiments be found to be the true doctrine of the word of God, a disbelief of the Divinity of Christ and of atonement, whatever may have been thought the sense of the holy Scriptures on these important subjects, will endanger no man's future peace and tranquillity. But, on the other hand, if eternal punishment will express no more than the displeasure which the just God really has against sinful men, a rejection of these interesting and important truths must certainly prove fatal,

To admit that mankind are universally sinners, and exposed to endless evil from the hand of God,

and that no atonement being made, all, or even any, will be finally saved, naturally leads to a disregard of the threatenings of God's holy word, and, indeed, to their being treated with contempt. And if the threatenings of the word of God may be disregarded, it will be evident, that they neither suggest motives to obedience, nor arguments against it; and if the threatenings we find in the oracles of God may be disregarded, so may the promises, for they are both from one and the same mouth, and rest on the same foundation. We may as well suppose that there may be instances wherein the latter may fail of fulfilment, as the former of execution. If God's hatred of iniquity may, in any instance, fail of being expressed, so also may his love of righteousness; for it is the same uniform disposition which is exercised in the love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity. If it may consist with the character of God, and the stability and perfection of his government, to suppress expressions of displeasure in any instance wherein iniquity takes place, we see not why he may not also as well withhold to an equal degree expressions of his approbation of righteousness. It is therefore manifest, that if the threatenings of the word of God fail in any instance whatever, its promises may also. And if either, or both, may fail in one instance, they both may in all. And when both threatenings and promises are given up, as to any worthiness of either fear or confidence, what is there left in the book of the Scriptures, which deserves credit, or is of any real worth? On this ground it must appear there can be no satisfactory evidence that what are usually termed the holy Scriptures are from God, from a Being worthy to be feared, respected, and obeyed as God.

These are but the natural consequences of an opinion that sinners, yea, that any sinner, may be forgiven, and received to the favour of God and eternal life, without any witness or manifestation that, in the estimation of the holy Governor of the world, he is deserving of endless destruction. These, of course, are consequences which evidently result from a denial that atonement has been made by Christ for sin ; and, therefore, on the same ground, from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

For if it be that Christ is not truly a Divine person, no atonement is made for sin, and consequently, if any sinners are saved, it must be without God's exhibiting any evidence in his government that he holds them guilty of death. And if the guilt of mankind do not in fact arise to such a height as this, they need be in no apprehensions for their eternal safety in whatever light they view the character of Christ. And no one, it may be presumed, who views the subject in this light will have his fears much excited by any threatenings he finds in his Bible, and consequently will have as little ground for placing any confidence in its promises. And when the threatenings of that holy book cease to awaken fear, and its promises to ensure hope, nothing is left which can with any justice be thought worthy of a revelation from God.

There are other and still further consequences proper to be mentioned, which naturally flow from the sentiment that sinners may be saved without an atonement, and without any manifestation of the abhorrence in which their characters are held by the righteous Governor of the world.

We trust it has been made evident, that if any of mankind may be finally saved, without witness given



in the government of God that he views them as deserving of his eternal anger, threatenings will naturally cease to be restraints from sin, and, of course, the promises contained in the holy Scriptures to encourage and excite to obedience. And where there are neither threatenings nor promises to operate on the minds of men, we can have but very faint ideas of any moral government exercised over them.

Moral creatures act from motive; and we know of no other way in which moral government can be exercised over them than by rules of conduct prescribed, and enforced by promises and threatenings. Creatures, incapable of influence from motives of good and evil, happiness and misery, are neither themselves moral, nor proper objects of moral government. And where creatures are subjected to no rules of conduct enforced by promises and threatenings, we see no sense in which they can be under law. It is essential to moral law, that it contain rules of action enforced by promises and threatenings. These are fit to operate as motives on the minds of moral creatures. But if the force and threatenings of the word of God be destroyed, the influence of the promises must equally cease, and moral government will then be at an end.

It will be in vain to consider men as under the moral government of their great Creator, so long as they are not subject to rules of action enforced by promises and threatenings; and equally in vain to expect that threatenings will have the influence of motives, if no manifestation of Divine displeasure are seen, or to be expected to follow transgressions. If the promises and threatenings contained in the holy Scriptures are set aside, we have yet to learn both our duty and the motives by which it is enforced :

and when this is left to conjecture, each one having an equal right to decide on the subject, it is easily seen that the rules of duty will be extremely vague and uncertain, and the motives to the practice of it equally weak and feeble. On such an hypothesis it must necessarily occur that the evidence of our being under moral government is exceedingly small, if not wholly taken away. Should we feel ourselves subject to no rules of action but such as our own minds collect from other sources than those of Divine revelation, and these enforced by no other motives, no other sanctions than our own reason and inclinations suggest, we cannot but at once see that the bands of moral obligation will be extremely weak, and moral law nearly, if not wholly, done away. If it be left to us to prescribe either the rules of duty to our Creator, or the punishments which shall follow their neglect, it is obvious that the reins of government are not in the hand of God, but that his honour and glory must lie at our mercy.

On the principle now under consideration, it seems, therefore, necessary to admit that the human race is not governed by law—by moral rules enforced by Divine sanctions—by promises and threatenings from their Creator, God. And all this naturally and clearly results from the sentiment, that the holy Governor of the world pardons and restores sinners to his favour, without manifesting at the same time a displeasure to them for their sins, equally fitted to deter from disobedience, as the execution of the threatened penalty. When it is thought that sin is and may be forgiven without any such manifestation of Divine displeasure as the threatenings of the word of God describe, it cannot but be seen that these threatenings lose their influence to restrain. And in proportion as it is hoped

and believed that sinners may be received to favour without God's ever manifesting the displeasure with them which his threatenings naturally import, in that proportion will threatenings cease to be motives of action. And as far as the influence of these motives is destroyed, so far that of the promises must necessarily fail, and moral government, for aught we see, come to an end.

These consequences naturally flow from the doctrine that sin may be, and is forgiven without an atonement; that is, without Divine manifestations of that displeasure, which the threatenings of God's holy word naturally lead us to suppose exist, whenever his holy law is transgressed. For, on the plan of salvation without an atonement, it must undeniably follow, that fear of future punishment is greatly lessened if not wholly taken away. And if Christ be not a Divine person, all ideas of atonement must be given up; and, consequently, it will be difficult for us to conceive what sort of moral government, or whether any is exercised over us. These consequences, therefore, naturally result from a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

It is yet further to be remembered, that, as far as the evidence fails of a moral government being constantly exercised over men, so far are we from having evidence that the world has a moral Governor. As far as we imbibe sentiments, and entertain principles, which in their just and natural consequences weaken the evidence of our being under moral government, we so far necessarily fall into doubt and uncertainty with respect to the existence of a moral Governor: on which principle everything before us is dark and uncertain, even whether we shall have any future existence or not; and if we have, where, or under

what circumstances it will be, lies wholly and entirely in the dark. What could ever originate principles which naturally lead to such consequences as these, and terminate in them, but that disposition of heart, spoken of in the holy Scriptures, the language of which is, "No God!"

It may serve further to illustrate the subject to observe, that the perfect holiness of God necessarily implies his hatred of iniquity. God is love, and this is a disposition inclining him with infinite strength to do good, to diffuse happiness, and to promote and advance the felicity of his moral kingdom. In proportion as the great Governor of the world loves the good and seeks the welfare of his kingdom, he must of necessity abhor and detest whatever tends to obstruct its peace and prosperity. God's hatred of iniquity must necessarily be as great as his love of righteousness, and bear an exact proportion to it. The truth of these observations will not probably be contested.

Hence it must follow, that uniformity of character in God requires that his hatred of iniquity, whenever and wherever it may take place, be rendered as visible in his administration of government as his love of righteousness. As it never could be believed that God loved righteousness, should the righteous be left unprotected and unrewarded, no more could it that he hated iniquity, should there be no marks of displeasure shown to those who commit it. The same disposition which inclines the holy God to manifest his love of righteousness in his creatures, must necessarily incline him with equal strength to manifest his hatred of their iniquity; nor can it any more consist with the glory of God, and the good of the system,

that he suppress the manifestation of the latter than of the former.

Hence it must clearly follow, that, if the glory of God, and the good of his moral kingdom, require that he manifest his approbation of righteousness in his creatures in every instance of it, they equally require that he manifest his abhorrence of iniquity in every instance in which it takes place. Love as necessarily requires, and the good of God's great kingdom as imperiously demands, that every injury to Divine government be avenged, as that every act of righteousness be acknowledged; and we can conceive of no way in which this can be done, but by rewards and punishments.

It will be obvious, to every reflecting mind, that if there be no exhibition in the work and death of Christ of God's just abhorrence of the sins of such as are saved by him, all the wickedness of that innumerable multitude, which will finally compose the body of Christ, will be passed by without any marks of Divine displeasure. And if this be so, where shall we find satisfactory evidence that the virtue and righteousness of such as follow the Lamb may not also be passed by without marks of Divine approbation?

These are among the difficulties which naturally occur respecting the doctrines of Divine revelation, and the nature of the moral government which is exercised over us, on a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

Having taken a view of some of the consequences naturally resulting from a denial of the atonement made by Christ, we observe,

II. That if Christ be not truly a Divine person, God as well as man, it must be, for aught we can see,

that he gave much occasion for his honesty to be called in question.

There were many things in the life and actions of Jesus of Nazareth, while he was on earth, which, it cannot but appear to us, were so far from that piety and meekness which are ever characteristic of true goodness in creatures, that were he but a man we see not how to reconcile them with common honesty. Waving the point, at present, of his actually claiming to possess powers and attributes which are peculiar to Divinity, it is manifest that he said and did many things which impressed the minds of both his friends and enemies with a belief that he claimed to be something more than a mere creature.

It appears evident that the Jewish rulers, the scribes and pharisees, thought that Jesus claimed both a character and a respect which belong only to the most high God, and can be due only to Him. On being censured by his enemies for healing an impotent man on the sabbath, Jesus answered, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John v. 17. On this, we are told, in the succeeding verse, that "the Jews sought to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." The connexion in which these words of the Saviour were spoken, must naturally have suggested to the Jews the construction they put on them. He was questioned upon having wrought a miracle of healing, which it required almighty power to effect. His reply that his Father wrought hitherto, and he worked, would naturally suggest the idea, that that Being, whose power could control nature, was he whom he called his Father; and that in common with him, whom he styled his Father, he himself possessed power over



nature, and could control it. Therefore, instead of either reproving them for the construction they put on his words, or correcting them for any mistake, he proceeds with a train of observations, which they could not but suppose were designed to vindicate his claim to prerogatives and powers which can belong to no mere creature. He tells them, that "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise ; that as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will ; that all judgment is committed unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; that the hour was now come, when the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, and hearing should live ; that the hour was coming when all in their graves should hear his voice, and come forth." On the supposition, that the Jews had misinterpreted the meaning of this great Teacher sent from God, and without ground had inferred from what he had just said that he claimed equality with God, can any one rationally suppose that the things which this charge occasioned him to say of himself were either designed or fitted to correct their mistake ? Any one may see that instead of this, the whole tenor of what our Saviour said on the subject had a direct tendency to confirm them in the opinion that he, in fact, did claim to himself such an equality with God as it would be blasphemy in any mere creature to assume.

But this was not the only opportunity the Saviour had for disavowing such high claims. On another occasion, speaking of God as his Father, he had explicitly said, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. On this the Jews took up stones to stone him. He mildly says, "Many good works have I showed you

from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone me?" They say, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, because thou being a man makest thyself equal with God." Does this true and faithful Witness, as honesty must have necessarily dictated had he been but a mere creature, reject with detestation, every pretension to so high a prerogative? Instead of that, he evidently proceeds, to the apprehension of the Jews, still to maintain the claim, and justify himself in making it. If those to whom the word of God came, were styled gods, "say ye," said he, "of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?" He then appeals to the works he wrought, as the evidence that the Father was in him, and he in the Father. Could the Jews reasonably suppose that he meant any other than to vindicate his claim to an equality with God? That they, in fact, did understand him in this light, is evident from their seeking again to take him.

To pass by other instances, Jesus was finally apprehended, and brought to trial before the high priest on a charge of blasphemy, the charge being this, that he claimed to be the Son of God in a sense, which was understood to imply equality with God. Jesus himself well knew that this was the charge on which they meant to inflict on him the penalty prescribed by the law of Moses for blasphemy. He could not be ignorant of this, for not only had the Jews repeatedly sought to stone him, on an apprehension that he claimed powers, and challenged prerogatives, which can belong to no mere creature, but the high priest, while he stood at his bar, adjured him by the living God to tell him whether he were the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus

immediately confesses that he claimed to be all that, which he well knew they considered it as blasphemy in him to claim ; and, instead of putting any other construction on terms and phrases in which he had often expressed what the character was in which he appeared and acted, he adds, " I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64. On the supposition that Jesus was but a mere creature, did not the high priest reason justly in saying, " What further need have we of witnesses ? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy ?" And how could Jesus be considered in any other light than that of a blasphemer, if he were, in fact, but a mere creature ? To hear any man, or mere creature, speak of himself as the Son of God ; as doing the same works which God doeth ; as quickening from the dead and raising up whom he will ; as having all judgment committed to him ; as causing the dead to hear his voice and live ; and asserting that it is his voice which shall finally raise all the dead, some to everlasting life, and others to damnation,—should we now hear any man assert all this of himself, should we not immediately conclude that he took to himself a character, and assumed a place infinitely too high for a creature ? Further than this : should we hear him speak of God as his Father, and assert that he and the Father are one ; that the Father is in him, and he in the Father ? should we hear him, in answer to the question, Whether he were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, reply in express and positive terms, I am ; immediately adding, that all shall see him sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven, as Mark xiv. 61, 62, should we hesitate to say that he made himself

equal with God? Can we reasonably think that the Jews and their rulers were in fault in judging that Jesus assumed an equality with God, and, on the supposition of his being a mere creature, was a blasphemer? Their criminality consisted in that hardness of heart which blinded them to the abundant evidence which Christ clearly exhibited of his possessing attributes and doing works which proved the Divinity of his person, and the Divine excellency of his character, and not in the want of that candour or art which could so analyze and explain seemingly offensive words and phrases, as to make them applicable to a mere creature. Were Jesus, in fact, no more than a mere creature, the Jewish rulers, for aught we can see, must have judged rightly, when they said, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God," John xix.

It may now, then, with propriety be asked, whether it can reasonably be supposed that any man of sense, of integrity, and honesty, would ever suffer himself to be executed as a blasphemer in making himself equal with God, when he could have refuted the charge with the utmost ease, and that by simply denying that he made the least pretensions to any such high claims, and renouncing with abhorrence every idea of furnishing any just ground for so horrid a charge?

Jesus well knew that it was on a charge of blasphemy that he was arrested, and finally executed. He knew too that he had spoken of himself, his powers and character, in terms which were very offensive to the Jews; that he had again and again used expressions which led them to think that he challenged to himself prerogatives which can belong to no mere creature. He was conscious, too, that whenever they brought a charge against him for these high

pretensions, instead of saying anything to remove unreasonable jealousies on their part, his replies were always such as actually confirmed them in the opinion that he claimed an equality with God. Finally he suffered and died under the imputation of making and maintaining this high claim, without ever saying a word either to deny, or refute the charge, or even giving a hint that it was unjust. All this remains to be reconciled with wisdom and good sense, with integrity and honesty, in the Man Jesus, did he really mean to claim no other prerogatives than what he possessed in common with creatures, or with other inspired men. Did he really mean to claim no character or powers above those of a mere creature, it seems impossible to reconcile his conduct with common honesty and integrity. We are, therefore, necessarily reduced to the dilemma, of being obliged to confess that Jesus claimed to possess in himself true and real Divinity, or we must remain incapable of reconciling his conduct with common honesty. If we choose the former part, we must admit that he was really a Divine person; if the latter, that he was not a honest man, but an impostor and blasphemer.

Having mentioned some of the reasons which the Jews and their rulers had for believing that Jesus claimed a character above that of any mere creature, we may further consider what apprehensions it would be natural to suppose his disciples would have of him in this respect.

Besides the things which they saw and heard in common with the Jews, his enemies, there were many things which passed between Christ and his disciples, every way tending to impress their minds with a belief that he claimed to possess a character infinitely

above that of any mere creature. Some of these will now be mentioned, without observing the particular order in which they took place.

On a certain occasion, Christ asked his disciples their opinion of him, saying "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter, speaking in the name of the rest of the disciples then present, as well as his own, "answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." On this, "He charged them that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." Matt. xvi. 15—17, 20. Christ's claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God, was considered by the Jews the same as his asserting an equality with God; and Christ never reproved either the Jews, or his disciples, for supposing that his professing himself to be the Son of God was really professing that he partook of the very essence of that God, whose Son he so often said he was. And when we consider the acquaintance they had with the writings of the ancient prophets, and the firm belief they had that they were divinely inspired, we can hardly suppose otherwise than that they expected when Christ, the promised Messiah, should come, he would appear in a character above that of any mere creature. They had no doubt that the second psalm was a prediction of Christ. There they noticed that the most high God styles him his Son; that he is the Lord whom the judges of the earth are exhorted to serve with trembling. To them it was also equally clear that the words of David in Psa. cx. were applicable to Christ, and only to him. And when they found that Jehovah styled him Lord, and promised to send the rod of his strength out of



Zion, and predicted that his people should be willing in the day of his power, what less could they suppose than that there would be a union between the Christ and the Lord Jehovah, which it would be blasphemous for any mere creature to claim!

Not only both friends and enemies of Christ were sensible that the several passages from the above mentioned psalms were applicable to their promised Messiah, the Christ; but they well knew that it had been promised that "unto them a child should be born, to them a Son given, whose name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace," Isa. ix. 6, and that the name of this Son should be "Immanuel," that is God with us, Isa. vii. 14. Having these prophecies in their hands, and being well acquainted with them, how could the enemies of Christ suppose otherwise than that it was blasphemy in Jesus, (not believing him to be the promised Messiah,) to speak of himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God? And how could his own disciples, who believed him to be the promised Messiah, when they confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, be supposed to profess anything less than a belief that he was truly a Divine person?

But there were many things said by Jesus, particularly to his disciples, which it may naturally be supposed could hardly fail to impress them with a belief that he claimed powers and pre-eminence which are peculiar to Deity. After the death of Lazarus, when his sister Martha understood that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. In the conversation which passed between them on that occasion, Jesus styles himself the Resurrection and the Life, and says, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet

shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," John xi. 25, 26.

Such was the opinion which the disciples of Christ had of their Lord, and so great their affection for him, that the thought of his leaving them was very trying and distressing. Jesus, in his great love and tenderness, took much pains to soothe and mitigate their sorrows on so mournful an event, and to convince them that it was for their good, that he should ascend up whence he came. In conversations he held with them on this subject, such words frequently dropped from his gracious lips as could hardly fail of impressing a conviction on their minds that the character and powers he claimed were above those of any mere creature. Some of these are especially worthy of notice;—

Christ said to his disciples, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," John xiv. 7—11, 13, 14. Again Jesus tells them in the same discourse, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth

from the Father, he shall testify of me," John xv. 26. Christ says again in the succeeding chapter, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Further, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you," John xvi. 7—15.

These things Christ said to his disciples just before his crucifixion, to convince them that it was best for them, and would be much to their advantage, that he should return to the Father, from whence he came, and to support and comfort them under the melancholy prospect of his departure.

Not only did the disciples see and observe many things in Jesus, while he was conversant with them before his death, which had an evident tendency to impress them with a belief, at least, that he assumed to himself a character, and claimed powers, which are never to be found in a mere creature; but there were things took place after his resurrection, which were greatly fitted to strengthen and confirm them in that belief.

On the morning of the resurrection, when the women who visited the sepulchre were told by an angel that Jesus was risen, and were directed to go and give information to his disciples of this joyful event, on their return they were met by Jesus himself, and kindly hailed by him. On this we are told, they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. So when Jesus appeared to his disciples on a mountain

in Galilee, where he had before directed them to meet him, they worshipped him, Matt. xxviii. 9, 17. When Thomas, who had not credited the reports of the other disciples that Jesus had arisen, actually himself saw and handled him, he joyfully exclaims, "My Lord and my God," John xx. 28. So when Christ told his disciples, a little before his ascension, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, and that they were to be the witnesses of what they had heard and seen, he adds, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," Luke xxiv. 49. Afterwards Jesus led the eleven out as far as to Bethany, there he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And, while he "blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

After all this, can it well be supposed that the minds of his disciples were not strongly impressed with a belief that Christ assumed to himself a character superior to that of any mere creature? It seems as though they could not fail of being struck with the idea that he claimed the exercise of powers and prerogatives which are proper to God alone. Again and again did Jesus tell his disciples that whatsoever they asked of God in his name, He would do it for them; that He would send the Comforter unto them. After his resurrection, he repeatedly suffered his disciples to worship him, and one of them to call him his Lord and his God. And for all this high respect shown to the Saviour of the world, they who offered it never received the least check from their Lord and Master. Before his death he had told them, that "they who had seen him had seen the Father, that

he was in the Father, and the Father in him, that he was the Resurrection and the Life, that whosoever liveth and believeth in him should never die." It does not appear credible that the disciples could suppose that a person, who was a mere creature, and claimed nothing to himself but what may belong to a creature, and be found in such, would ever have spoken of himself, and of his powers, and what he would do, in such language as this. Nor can it reasonably be supposed, that they should expect no reproof from Jesus for the high respect and worship they paid him, had he meant to appear, and be received and treated in no higher character than that of a creature, though commissioned and sent of God to reveal Divine truth, as other men had been before him, and were after him.

The conduct of Jesus in these respects was exceedingly different from that of his disciples. Whenever they performed any miraculous works, they disclaimed their being done by any power or virtue of their own, they attributed all to the power of Jesus. This must have shown the opinion they had of Jesus. If any such like respect and worship were ever attempted to be paid to them, as they paid to the Lord Jesus, they rejected it with a just abhorrence. Thus, when Cornelius the centurion met Peter, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him, the apostle immediately took him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man," Acts x. 25, 26. So, when at Lystra, upon a striking miracle of healing being wrought by the hands of Paul and Barnabas, the priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands, and would have done sacrifice with the people; these pious men, shocked with the thought of receiving such honours, "rent their clothes. and ran in among the

people, crying out, *Sirs, why do you these things?* We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein," Acts xiv. 13—15. They utterly disclaimed such honours as they well knew Jesus had received from his disciples, and that without disclaiming his right to them, or in any degree reproving them for it; honours and worship, which, it must appear, they thought were due to God alone.

So the beloved disciple was, more than once, reproved for the worship he attempted to offer to the angel whom Jesus sent to reveal to him the future state of the church and world. Such care was taken by those faithful servants of Christ as were known to be but mere creatures, that the respect and worship due only to him, who is a jealous God, should be transferred to no other.

One instance more of respect which was publicly paid Jesus, just before his death, may with propriety be mentioned in connexion with others abundantly fitted to impress the minds of both friends and enemies, that he did not refuse honours which they considered to be Divine. When he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, the week on which he was crucified, his disciples and the multitude, which went before and followed him, animated and raised in their feelings by Divine influence, cried "*Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*" After Jesus entered the temple, children followed him with their hosannas to the Son of David, Matt. xxi. 9, 15. At this the chief priests and scribes took umbrage, and asked Jesus, "*Hearest thou what these say?*" and this in



a manner which showed that they viewed Jesus as admitting honours to be paid to him which were due only to the Most High. Jesus, instead of rejecting the imputation, justifies himself in it by referring to the prediction, that the Lord, whose name is excellent in all the earth, should ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, Ps. viii. 1, 2. This prophecy the Saviour evidently speaks of as being now fulfilled in the hosannas uttered by the children in the temple; these hosannas were to that Son of David, whom David himself styles his Lord. According to the application which Jesus makes of this prophetic prediction in these praises and hosannas were perfected the praises of him whom David thus addresses, "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." After so explicit an application of this prophecy to himself, how can it rationally be otherwise supposed than that both the friends and enemies of Jesus then present believed him to receive honours and praises which are due only to God? Little evidence is wanted to convince candid minds that the chief priests and scribes viewed the matter in this light when they put the question, "Hearest thou what these say?" And on the application they heard him make of the prediction, no doubt could remain on their minds that Jesus admitted Divine honours to be paid to him.

A few remarks may now be made on the conduct of Jesus, in leaving the minds, more particularly of his disciples, impressed with a belief that he claimed a character above that of a mere creature, and honours too high to be paid to any but the supreme God. After a careful attention to the circumstances which have been mentioned, no reasonable doubt can remain

of his having left his disciples strongly impressed with such a belief. Here then, we observe,

1. That Christ appointed a certain number of his disciples, who had accompanied him through the whole of his public ministry, to be his witnesses among all nations of what they had seen and heard, and to preach to men repentance and remission of sins in his name. It cannot be otherwise thought than that Christ meant they should be every way suitably furnished to the very important work to which he appointed them: the success of the gospel, the prosperity of his kingdom on earth, and the salvation of sinners in every age, all concurred to require it. The Saviour's great concern for this, and his peculiar care in providing for it, appear especially in the promise he made them, that he would send the Spirit of truth, who should lead them into all truth, and that he himself would "be with them alway, even unto the end of the world."

Now, can it possibly be, that that Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, would leave the minds of these his witnesses under false impressions respecting the character of him whom they were to preach as the only Saviour of sinners? Impressions which would lead them to exhibit him to sinners under a character infinitely superior to what belonged to him, and to what he ever took or claimed to himself? Could the Lord Jesus admit that these his witnesses should preach him to the world in such a manner, and under such a character, as would naturally lead men to pay him a respect which would derogate from the honour of God, and which would expose, and necessarily expose mankind, in every age, to idolatrous worship.

Should it to this be replied, that Jesus said enough,

and that on many occasions, to guard the minds of his disciples, as well as those of all others, against their apprehending him to be anything above a mere creature—such as that the Father was greater than he; that the day and hour when certain things were to take place were known, not even to the Son, but to the Father only; that such express declarations of Christ were enough, in all reason, to remove from their minds all apprehensions that he claimed to be anything above a creature,—it may be observed, that whatever opinion they had of the exalted dignity of the character of their Lord, they actually considered him as acting in a capacity subordinate to that which naturally and originally belonged to him. This is evident from the words of the apostle, where he tells us, that Christ Jesus, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” Phil. ii. 6, 7. And if Jesus acted a subordinate part, and in a subordinate character, his saying that his Father was greater than he, his disciples might justly apprehend, was no otherwise than entirely consistent with his being truly a Divine person, God as well as man. And acting in this subordinate capacity, they might well suppose that the appointment of the day and hour of which Christ speaks, was what did not belong to him, but to that Father of his to whom he appeared in the form of a servant. And that these were, in fact, the apprehensions of the apostle, must be evident from his saying that he, who was in the form of God, &c. took on him the form of a servant. The utter impropriety of saying that a mere creature, who necessarily and by nature could be no other than a servant, took on him such a form, must have occurred to the apostle—

it might with equal propriety be said, that he took on him existence.

The language of Christ to his disciples, and that on a variety of occasions, was such as might not only rationally be expected to beget in them an opinion that he claimed to himself a character superior to that of a creature, but it appears did, in fact, leave a strong impression on their minds that Jesus ever meant to avow the claim.

That such an impression was left on the minds of the apostles is manifest from the respect they showed him after his ascension to heaven—a respect which it would be idolatrous to show to any creature. They paid Divine worship to the Lord Jesus by praying to him, and countenanced others in calling on his name, and encouraged them to it. Thus Paul tells us that when he was buffeted by the messenger of Satan, he besought the Lord thrice that it might be taken from him. That the Lord to whom he addressed his prayer was Christ, is evident from the next words of the apostle. He tells us that he, that is the Lord to whom he addressed his prayer, said unto him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore,” proceeds the apostle, “will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,” 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Paul considered that strength which is made perfect in weakness, to be the power of Christ. How naturally, and almost inevitably would this language, this representation of the apostle, lead those to whom he wrote to believe, not only that Jesus was the object of religious adoration, but that he both heard and answered the prayers of his people; that he, by his grace, supported and strengthened his people under all their trials. In agreement with this,

the Corinthian church well knew that his first epistle to them was addressed "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." How naturally will the minds of christians, on reading these passages, turn upon that ever memorable and gracious promise of Christ to his disciples, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them !" Matt. xviii. 20.

Paul was not the only one who paid Divine honours and worship to Christ. The first martyr, Stephen, evidently did the same. We are told that his enemies stoned him, "calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," Acts vii. 59, 60.

But these are not the only things in the writings of the apostles, which naturally and almost irresistibly impress the mind with a belief that they viewed Jesus as sustaining a character far above that of any mere creature. When relating to the Corinthian christians things which took place among the Jews in the wilderness, and speaking of the provocations they offered to God, he tells them, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted—neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted," 1 Cor. x. 6, 9. He had just before said, that "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." How naturally and almost necessarily would the Corinthians and christians in every succeeding age be led by such a representation as this to suppose that this great apostle viewed Jesus as the same glorious God and Saviour who led the

people of Israel into the wilderness, and who for their tempting him so often, and in so daring a manner as they did, executed awful judgments on them! It is difficult to conceive that the apostle should not be aware that his readers would make such an inference, unless he had taken peculiar care to guard them against it, which he did not.

These things are mentioned to show the reason we have to think that Jesus left his apostles strongly impressed with a belief that he was superior to any and every creature; yea, as John expresses it, "that this is the true God and eternal life." The same subject might still be pursued to advantage, but as it may lead into the argument on the positive evidence, from the holy Scriptures, of the Divinity of Christ, we desist. On this argument it is not designed directly to enter any further, than to mention a number of circumstances which evince that Jesus left both his friends and enemies under strong impressions of a belief that he claimed to himself a character and powers which belong only to the true God.

On the circumstances now mentioned, which were evidently fitted to impress the minds of Christ's disciples with a belief that he assumed to himself a character above that of a mere creature, and the evidence that this was their effect, and their minds indeed left under these impressions, the following observations are submitted:—

1. If Jesus had that concern for the honour and glory of the living and true God, which he ever professed while on earth, it is utterly unaccountable that he should either do or say anything which should tend, in any measure, to beget an opinion in his disciples that he offered himself as an object



worthy of Divine honours, worship, and trust, were he but a mere creature.

That Christ really did and said many things which not only greatly tended to beget an opinion in his disciples, that, though possessed of human nature, he yet claimed powers and prerogatives which are peculiar to Deity, but actually had this effect, it is apprehended is evident from passages of Scripture which have been already quoted, and the observations made on them. Christ well knew that the whole heathen world was now sunk into gross idolatry. He well knew, too, the extreme proneness of God's own people to the same sin, and the variety of means he had used with them, and the heavy judgments with which he had again and again visited them, to break them off from their idolatries, and to check and cure their wicked eagerness after the idols and vanities of other nations. It is also to be remembered, that the great and professed object of Christ's coming into the world was to teach the true religion, and the right worship of the one living and true God. How then it could be possible that he should so often do and say things, which not only led the Jews, his enemies, to believe that he assumed to himself an equality with God, but also his own chosen witnesses, who were to bear his name through the earth, and to be his heralds among other nations, to publish the true religion, teach the only acceptable worship, and proclaim the way of salvation to perishing sinners—how all this could be possible were Jesus but a mere creature, it must be difficult even to conceive. Yet that Jesus, who came a light into the world, and of whom it is witnessed that he was faithful in all God's house, in fact did all this. He not only died under

the imputation from his enemies of being guilty of blasphemy in claiming an equality with God, but he finally left his chosen friends and witnesses under so firm a belief that he himself is the true God and eternal life, that they confidently addressed their prayers and worship to him, and readily yielded up their lives in testimony of their having embraced, and faithfully taught the truth, the only truth as it is in Jesus. Further; he left them so strongly impressed with a belief of his Divinity, that their preaching everywhere conveyed the same high ideas of his character to all who embraced the religion and doctrines they taught; and from them has it been handed down through every age to the christian church, and almost universally considered as a fundamental article of the christian faith. Thus the things originally taught by Christ himself, and handed down by the preaching and writings of his apostles and witnesses, have been the means of betraying almost the whole christian world ever since into the most palpable and open idolatry, if it be indeed that this Jesus is not truly a Divine person, and the proper object of religious worship.

That neither Jesus himself nor his apostles, who were immediately taught of God, should foresee that such would be the effect of the doctrines they taught, is what may not be admitted—and foreseeing that they should guard in no other manner than they have done against it, is a problem which never has been, and probably never will be solved by those who deny the Divinity of Christ.

2. As the name and character of Jesus were very dear to his disciples, we cannot otherwise believe than that they would do everything in their power to wipe off all the aspersions which were cast upon them by

his enemies. They well knew that the great pretext the Jews had for rejecting him, and putting him to death, was that he claimed to be a Divine person. Yea, and one of his most eminent apostles and faithful witnesses had fully united with them in opinion that Jesus made this claim, and was, therefore, guilty of death. On this ground only could he say, as he does, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Acts xxvi. 9. The apostles, and Paul especially, could not but well know that the claim of Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," which the Jews, and Paul heretofore with them, had considered as blasphemy, was the great stumbling block in the way of their receiving the gospel. Could this to them stumbling block be, consistently with truth, taken away, is it supposable the apostles would not have done it? Can it be believed that they would have suffered their brethren according to the flesh to persist in rejecting the christian doctrine, through some misapprehensions of the character and claims of its author? And this, too, knowing that this misapprehension was ill founded, and might with the utmost ease have been removed?

The exceedingly tender concern which the apostle Paul particularly expressed for the Jewish nation, and his ardent wishes for their conversion to christianity, forbid the thought that he should suffer them to remain under an error which must prove fatal to them, when it might with the utmost ease have been removed, and that only by speaking a few words, without any laboured chain of reasoning, and this, too, when both the glory of God, the character of their Lord, and the general interest of his cause, all required that an error of so gross and fatal a nature, should be

corrected. Were the apostles and first preachers of the gospel aware, as they could not but be, that the Jews, his enemies, apprehended that Jesus had claimed prerogatives and powers which are peculiar to God, and had professedly for this reason rejected, and put him to death, to suppose they knowingly left them under such an apprehension, while they themselves were sensible that it was without any just foundations, must render them unworthy the character of even common honesty, and of ever having any credit paid them as messengers of God to a perishing world.

Nor less absurdly can it be supposed, that they would leave the character of Jesus, who was so high in their esteem, and so very near and dear to them, under a load of infamy, not to be wiped off from that time to this, were it true that he was guilty of the crime which his enemies laid to his charge, and under the imputation of which he died an ignominious death; and yet the apostles were thoroughly sensible that were Jesus but a mere creature, his name and character deserved all this infamy, and must and ought eternally to lie under it. To suppose that they had anything like that friendship to Christ which they professed, or even common honesty, renders the thought inadmissible that they should not have explicitly declared against the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, and have carefully insisted that Jesus never claimed either a character or honours above what might be due to a creature, could they have done this consistently with truth, and with the apprehensions they had themselves had of Christ, and of the claims he openly made while on earth.

Further, we are to recollect, that Jesus, before he left the world, promised his apostles to send the Spirit

of truth who should guide them into all truth. From him it was that they received the doctrines they taught, under his direction they both preached and wrote. Nor can it be supposed, that under his guidance they should both speak and write of their Lord in a manner and in terms fitted to impress others with an apprehension that they believed him to possess a character and dignity above any mere creature, unless he in fact did. Yet, that they really did speak of him in such terms, as have left their successors, in general, in every age, under strong and fixed apprehensions that Christ was believed by them to possess a character and powers truly Divine, is what cannot be denied. Had it not been that the language in which they speak of their Lord, and of his character, most naturally tended to impress the minds of those to whom they spoke and wrote with a belief that they viewed him as being superior to any mere creature, the labour and pains which have been taken to remove the apprehensions of it from the minds of men must have been unnecessary; nor could there have been occasion for all that criticism, (not to say wresting of Scripture,) which the enemies to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity have made use of, and that with comparatively small effect, to convince mankind, that nothing is said in the sacred writings tending to produce an idea of the superiority of Jesus to any mere creature. The writers of the New Testament frequently speak of Jesus in terms which their readers in general believe cannot be applicable to any mere creature. When they find them speaking of Jesus "as being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God"—representing him as "the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of his person"—asserting that it was he

“who laid the foundation of the earth, and that the heavens are the work of his hand”—ascribing unchangeableness to him as that Being who is the same, and whose years shall not fail,—when in addition to all this they hear them pronouncing the gospel benediction upon all, who in every place “call on the name of Jesus Christ their Lord,”—how can they well suppose any other, than that these writers viewed Jesus as being a person truly Divine, worthy of religious adoration !

How can it be believed that God himself immediately influenced the minds of the apostles to write in such a manner, and to speak in such terms of Jesus, were he but a creature ! and if they were not under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, nothing which they said or wrote may be considered as of Divine authority, nor ought to have any other weight than the mere opinion of weak, imperfect and fallible men.

And to suppose that Jesus himself should influence his apostles to such an opinion of his person and character, either while he was personally with them or after his ascension, were he but a mere creature, and to go and spread it all over the earth, and transmit it to the latest generation, must naturally lead us to view him in no better light than his enemies did while he was on earth—a deceiver. Then is the authority of Christ in matters of faith, and that of the writers of the New Testament, both effectually set aside.

It may deserve to be still further noticed, that if Jesus be but a mere creature, all who in any age have paid Divine worship to him must, according to the express decision of the holy Scriptures, be excluded



from the kingdom of heaven, and perish. Nothing is more clearly and expressly asserted than this. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived : neither fornicators, nor idolaters—shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. We are told also, that "the fearful, and unbelieving, and idolaters—shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death," Rev. xxi. 8. And again, that "without are murderers and idolaters," Rev. xxii. 15.

That there have been many in every age of the christian church who have, in fact, and that designedly, paid Divine honours to the Lord Jesus Christ, is what cannot be denied ; and that this is open and gross idolatry, if he be but a creature, will admit of no dispute. This is not only a direct violation of the first and great commandment of the law, but they who are guilty of it, and sustain the character of idolaters, are most expressly excluded from the kingdom of heaven, and condemned to suffer the pains of the second death.

On the hypothesis that Jesus of Nazareth is but a creature, what ground of charity can we have for any who in any age have paid Divine honours to him? What are we to think of the thief on the cross, and of the first martyr, Stephen, who in their dying moments commended themselves and their departing spirits to Christ? What of the apostle Paul, who "counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him : " who under the trials and temptations which he endured in the cause of Christ, prayed to him for needed grace? Yea, what of all those eminent saints, who in every succeeding age

have paid religious adoration to Christ, and trusted their everlasting concerns to him? Judging according to the express rules of the word of God, how can we believe any other than that they are excluded from the kingdom of heaven?

To say that we may and ought to have charity for such, because though deluded, yet sincere, necessarily goes to a denial that any articles of faith whatever are necessary, and opens the door for our charity and fellowship with papists, mohammedans, pagans and infidels, because all these, as well as the worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ, may be sincere in their several and different professions. Yea, it goes as effectually to a denial of the Divine authority of the holy Scriptures, because we there find all idolaters most explicitly excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

Nor can it be uninteresting to our present argument here to remark the utter impropriety of christian communion between those who believe in the real Divinity of Jesus Christ, and those who do not. It is as really inconsistent and unwarrantable for Arians and Socinians to have charity for such as believe the Lord Jesus to be truly God as well as man, as it is for the friends of this doctrine to hold christian fellowship with them. If it be that the sentiments of the former are scriptural, the latter are open and wilful idolaters. If those of the latter are agreeable to the oracles of God, the consequence is undeniable that the former deny the Lord who bought them—and by denying the Son, they also deny the Father. For the enemies to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity to have christian fellowship with its friends, is to become partakers with them in their supposed idolatry; and for the latter to hold christian

communion with the former, is to treat this great doctrine with manifest indifference, and as of no importance to the salvation of sinners either one way or the other. Yea, the language of this fellowship with such as deny the Divinity of Christ is, that though he be truly God, it is immaterial whether we acknowledge and worship him as such, or view and treat him as such, but like ourselves a mere creature. If Christ be truly God as well as man, the obligation to acknowledge and worship him as God will not be denied. Hence the utter inconsistency of the friends to this doctrine holding christian fellowship with such as reject it, must be obvious. Nor is it less obvious, that the rejecters of the doctrine of Christ's real Divinity become partakers of the idolatry of such as pay Divine honours to him, by holding christian fellowship with them if he be indeed a mere creature; and, on their own principles, they cannot but consider the language of God to them to be, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

If to pray to Jesus Christ, and to worship him, be idolatry, it must be manifest from the passages of Scripture already quoted, that his apostles and the primitive christians were guilty of the sin. Nor, on this hypothesis, can it be denied, that the greater part of christians in every succeeding age have been idolaters. That the writings and examples of Christ's apostles have been actually followed by this effect, will not be denied; nor can it be much less obvious, that they greatly tended, and were exceedingly fitted to produce it in such as received their writings as the oracles of God. And if it be true, that the writings of both the evangelists and apostles had even any considerable tendency to this effect, on such as

received them as authorities in matters of faith ; this is a consideration sufficient of itself to take away their credibility as being divinely inspired. For none can suppose that writings divinely inspired for the benefit and direction of mankind, and that in their infinitely most important concerns, would not be most clearly and sufficiently guarded against a construction and an effect utterly subversive of all their benefit, and of the design for which they were inspired.

The effect which the example and writings of the authors of the New Testament has actually had on by far the greater part of mankind in every age, who have received them as of Divine authority, seems to be a sufficient proof of their tendency to produce a belief of the Divinity of Christ, and to engage his followers to pay Divine honours to him. For, though there be a strong disposition in men, naturally, to pervert Divine truth, when we reflect that those of the most exemplary piety, as well as of the first abilities have generally received and conscientiously adhered to the doctrine of Christ's true Divinity, this will be quite insufficient so far to acquit those writings of such tendency to this effect, as is enough to destroy their credit as being of Divine original.

That Jesus Christ knew that both his friends and his enemies believed him to assume a character, and to receive honours while he was on earth, which can belong to no mere creature, cannot reasonably be denied : the evidence of it is such as must carry conviction to candid minds. That he never said or did anything which actually removed the apprehensions they had of his claiming these honours, is equally clear ; that he should do no more to silence the murmurs of enemies, and correct the errors of his friends, when

it could have been done with a word's speaking, were he but a mere creature, will be with great difficulty accounted for by those who reject the doctrine of his Divinity. Instead of this, he continued to speak of himself in such terms, and to admit such honours to be done him, as can admit of no excuse if he be but a creature, and can by no means be reconciled with common honesty, much less with real piety.

After a careful and candid attention to the language in which Jesus frequently spoke of himself, and to the instances of respect and worship which he often admitted to be paid him, who can believe him worthy to be received as a teacher come from God, if he be in fact no more than a creature? Instead of this, how can he be viewed in any other light than that of a deceiver—yea the greatest impostor that ever came into the world?

On what ground those who deny the true and real Divinity of Christ can censure and condemn the ancient Jews for putting him to death, and their present existing descendants for rejecting him, is not easily seen. Instead of removing their objections against christianity, an object which Arians and Socinians professedly have in view in their labours in opposition to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, there must be reason to fear that they themselves split upon the rock which has been so fatal to the Jews, and that to them, as well as to the Jews, Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

If it be true, that Christ has given just grounds to suspect that he claimed prerogatives and powers which can belong to no mere creature, it will be an imputation on his character as a teacher from God, which never can be wiped off, if he be but a creature.

A creature who will do this, at once forfeits all right to credit. That Christ, in fact, did this, is too clear and obvious to admit of controversy. The consequence is irresistible, that if he be but a creature, he is utterly unworthy to be received as a teacher sent from God. This being the case, it is obvious that no credit is to be paid to his instructions and doctrines, and that the system of religion founded on what was taught by Christ and his apostles has no just foundation for its support. So obviously does the christian system rest on the truth of the real Divinity of its glorious Author, and must stand or fall with it. Take away this corner-stone, the whole fabric at once falls to the ground!

If the evidence of christianity be taken away, none, excepting Jews, will pretend that we have any revelation from God. And if the writings of the evangelists and apostles are an imposition, it may readily be concluded that those of Moses and the prophets are no better. In this way does it again appear, that by rejecting the doctrine of the true and real Divinity of Christ, we are necessarily turned back to our original heathenish state, and left without any other or better guide than the weak, perverted reason of wicked and fallible men! On this hypothesis, what the moral character of that Being who made all things is, as it never has, so never in this world will it be discovered. And, consequently, we must remain strangers to the nature and kind of that worship which he requires, and will accept, if there be any such; or whether there be any state of future existence—of punishments, or rewards. These infinitely interesting and important subjects must all lie in the dark, as they ever would have done, had no immediate revelation been made



from heaven. And we are far from having any satisfactory evidence that such revelation has ever been made to men, if Jesus of Nazareth did not, in fact, possess those prerogatives and powers which, it is manifest, both his friends and his enemies believed him to claim.

A brief summary of the preceding argument shall conclude the subject.

It has been urged, that if Christ be not truly a Divine person, God as well as man, there is no atonement made for the sins of men—no manifestation in the government of God of that holy displeasure and anger against the characters and conduct of such as are saved by Christ, as the threatenings of the word of God necessarily lead us to suppose do actually exist. If this displeasure do not appear in the death and sufferings of him who was sacrificed for his people, it no where appears; there is no manifestation of it. It must follow, of course, that Christ is not the Lord their righteousness; that it is not on account of any legal righteousness, any honour whatever done to the holy law of God as sanctioned by the penalty of his eternal anger for every transgression, that penitents are pardoned and saved.

If any of mankind are saved without God's exhibiting in his government that displeasure with them which the threatenings of his word import, the evidence of grace in their salvation is taken away; for grace, in good conferred on creatures, can no further appear than we have evidence that God, who judges righteous judgment, views them as deserving of evil. Hence it must be evident, that a denial of the doctrine of atonement by the death of Christ, renders the

Scripture doctrine of the salvation of sinners by grace quite unintelligible, if it do not wholly subvert it. To suppose the penitence of a sinner to be the consideration on which he is saved, and again received to favour, is equally inconsistent with all ideas of grace in his salvation. For this would imply, either that he was the object of no other or greater displeasure of God than might be removed by his penitence and return to obedience, or that the law of God and the rule of his government are such as to subject no one to punishment, but on neglect or refusal of repentance. But, if the penitence of the transgressor remove all existing Divine displeasure from him, we can surely see no evidence of grace in his being received to favour. And if the law of God and the rule of his government are such, that they subject no one to punishment, nor render any obnoxious to it but final impenitents, it is obvious that such as do repent are exposed by law to no evil or curse, and consequently no act of grace is needed for their being restored to the favour of God, and made for ever happy in him. Or should it be supposed, that God pardons absolutely, without making any honour done to his violated law, either by the work and death of Christ, or the penitence of the sinner, the consideration on which his favour is bestowed, the evidence that sinners are saved by grace, is greatly diminished, if not wholly done away. For, in this case, we can see no certain proof that they ever were the objects of any great degree of Divine displeasure, if any at all: and, indeed, if the death and sufferings of Christ were not an atonement for sin—if his people are not saved from the curse of the law by his being made a curse for them, we can discern no necessity for his coming

in order to the salvation of sinners, nor how Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

If the Divinity and atonement of Christ be denied, the forgiveness of sin, on any hypothesis whatever that we can form, must evidently set aside the revealed moral law, sanctioned by promises and threatenings, as a rule of Divine administration and government. If there be no manifestations of Divine displeasure and anger in the instances wherein they are threatened in the word of God, and to the degree which the threatenings import, we cannot but apprehend a disagreement between the word and the government of God. And as far as any one apprehends there is such a disagreement, he will feel himself at liberty to form his own ideas of the moral character of God, and no longer make his written word the rule of his faith.

Further, if that Divine displeasure with which sinners universally are threatened in the word of God, be never manifested against the characters and conduct of believers in Christ, if it be never to appear that the innumerable multitude saved by Christ are in themselves, and in the Divine estimation, as deserving of eternal ruin as those who finally perish, we are naturally led to the conclusion to which such as deny the Divinity of Christ probably mean to come, that there will be no future state of punishment. And whenever it comes to be believed, that the threatenings of the word of God will never be executed—that the Divine displeasure which they import will never be expressed in its natural and genuine fruits, these threatenings cease to be motives of action, and immediately lose their influence to restrain. And whenever the threatenings contained in the holy

Scriptures cease to operate as motives of action, the promises must, of course, lose their influence. And when the ground of our faith in both threatenings and promises is taken away, there is nothing left in the Bible worthy of credit as a revelation from God.

Still further, as moral creatures, at least while in a state of probation, are ever governed by motive, and influenced by prospects of good and evil, we no sooner give up the promises and threatenings of the word of God, than we become utter strangers both to the nature and the rules of that moral government which is exercised over us, and indeed to the evidence that we live under such a government. And as we lose sight of evidence that a moral government is exercised over us, we do also to the same degree of the existence of a moral Governor of the world.

These appear to be but the natural and genuine consequences of a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

It has been further urged, that on the supposition of Christ being but a creature, it will be extremely difficult, if not utterly impossible, to reconcile many parts of his conduct with the character of even an honest man. That many things which Jesus said and did while on earth left the minds, both of his friends and enemies, strongly impressed with a belief that he claimed to himself prerogatives and powers which can belong to no mere creature, cannot justly be denied. It was this, and this only that furnished the Jews with any tolerable pretext for putting him to death. That they verily believed that Jesus made such claims as they often charged him with, cannot reasonably be questioned. That Christ should hear himself again and again charged with being a blasphemer, and yet in no instance remove what he well

knew his enemies considered as a just ground for the charge, is utterly unaccountable, if he did not mean ever to challenge that which would have been just ground for the charge were he no more than a creature. But, above all, is it utterly unaccountable, that Christ should suffer himself to be put to death for claiming a character which can belong to no mere creature, if he meant no such claim ; and instead of renouncing everything which could possibly excite suspicion that he assumed so high a character to himself, that he should while under examination on the subject before the high priest say things which he could not but know were directly fitted to strengthen and confirm them in the belief that he claimed to be the Son of God, in a sense which they considered it as blasphemous for any mere creature to pretend to be ; and all this when he could with the utmost ease, and that by a word, have removed every pretext for the accusation made by his enemies, is what cannot be accounted for on any principles whatever, consistently with his being an honest man, unless he is something more than man, even the true God and eternal Life.

That he left his particular friends and followers impressed with the fullest and firmest belief that he possessed perfections and powers which distinguished him from all mere creatures, and proved him to possess a nature which is truly Divine, there appears the strongest reasons to believe. Accordingly he received that respect and worship from them before he left the world, which it would have been impious for any mere creature to permit to be paid to him. He made promises of what he would do for them after his ascension, which they well knew it required

almighty power and universal dominion to enable him to accomplish. Prayer was addressed directly to him by his disciples, and graciously answered by him. The apostles, whom he commissioned to go and preach the gospel to every creature, ever spoke of him in terms, and attributed a character to him which they could not otherwise than believe would lead all who embraced the doctrines they taught to view him as an object of supreme love, and of religious worship and adoration, as well as to place the fullest and most entire confidence in him. Yea, they considered prayer to Christ, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, as in those days a distinguishing mark of a christian.

Now that Jesus himself should direct and authorize his apostles to exhibit him under a character in their preaching and doctrines which he could not but foresee and know would greatly tend to render him an object of idolatrous respect were he but a mere creature, is itself enough to take away all confidence in his integrity—especially as one great object of the coming of the Messiah was foretold to be to destroy the idols, and to put away idolatrous worship.

That the apostles and first preachers of christianity, who appeared most strongly attached to the person and interest of their Lord and Saviour, should leave his character under the stigma of his having died a blasphemer, while they themselves well knew that he claimed no powers and prerogatives but such as may belong to a creature, is of itself enough to destroy all confidence in them, either as inspired or as honest men.

These considerations are sufficient to show, that if Christ be not truly a Divine person, neither he nor



his apostles can deserve our credit; the evidence that his gospel is from God is taken away; and we are left in the dark, and wholly without a guide, in matters of infinite importance, and which most highly as well as everlastingly concern us.

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